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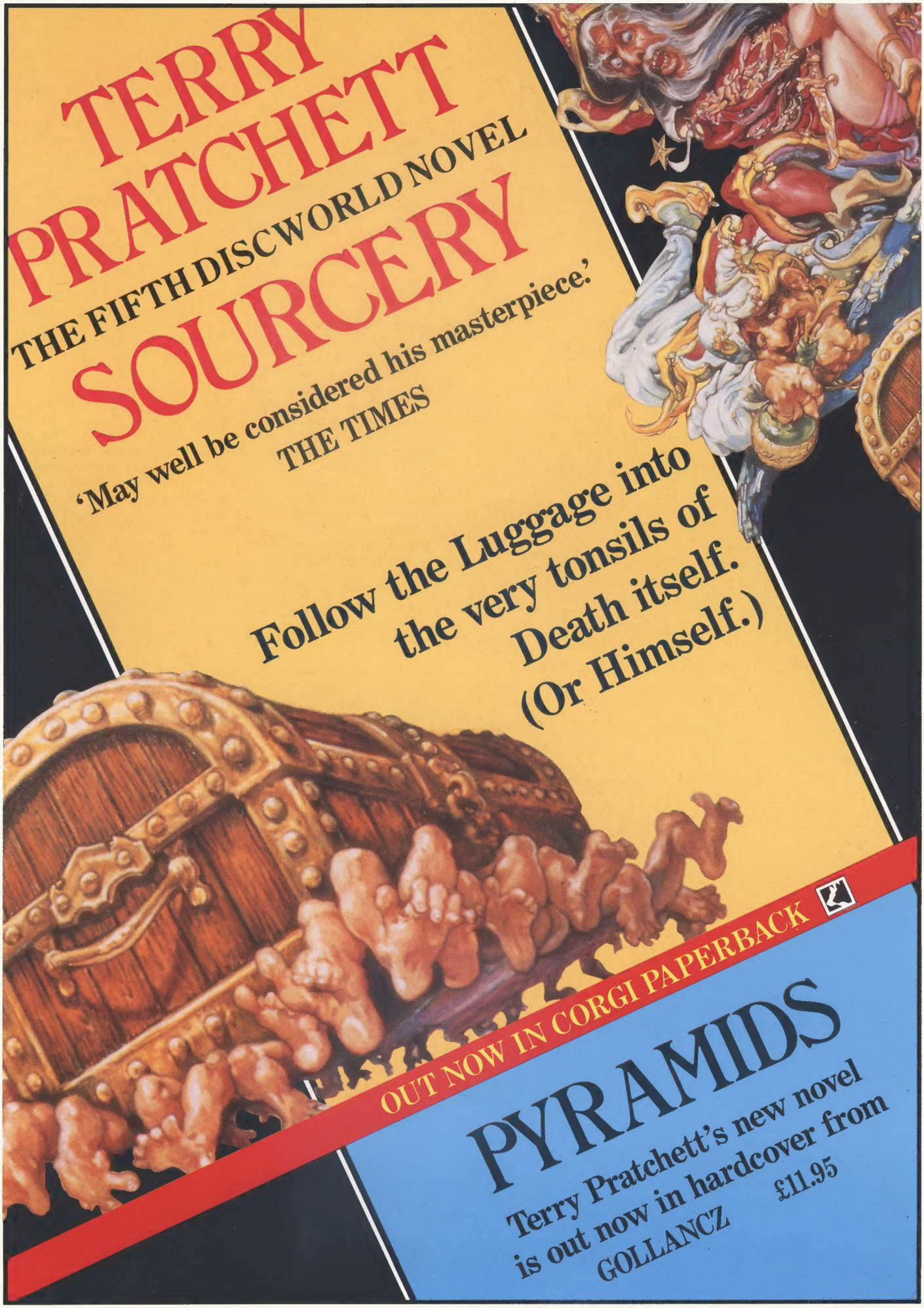

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CONTENTS

4 *NEWS* The latest information on what's going down beyond the grave

7 *RAISING THE DEAD* Your letters from the pit of terror

8 *THE AXEMAN COMETH* An interview with John Farris, America's premier novelist of terror

11 *LOOK, SEE* Nicholas Vince takes **FEAR** fiction into Cenobite territory

14 *EDITING HELLBOUND* Ace film editor Richard Marden discusses the cutting edge

16 *PHANTASMAGORIA* A set report from Clive Barker's new movie, *Nightbreed*, starring David Cronenberg

19 *MOVIE MAINLINE* Out Takes plus other film faves

22 *VIDEO VIBES* And rental raves

23 *OFF THE SHELF* The latest literary offerings under hard and soft cover

30 *WITCHFINDER GENERAL* Richard E Grant goes a-hunting

32 *A SCHOOL FOR SADISTS* Anthony Hickox directs *Waxwork*

34 *DEMON SEED* Stan Winston creates a monster to end all

42 *BLOBBERMOUTH SPEAKS!* Jack H Harris tells all

43 *DRIVING FORCE* Stephen Gallagher's short story continues with Reuben the car thief in possession of a uniquely horrifying motor

48 *DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS* Female scribes step out of the kitchen and into the night

■ **COMPETITIONS**

7 *CUP AND SOURCERY* Six fabulous presentations to be won

17 *PINHEAD* Gruesome replicas for home use go to six lucky winners

33 *WAXWORK* Six videos to be won

Hellraiser and Hellbound: Hellraiser II copyright Clive Barker and New World Pictures

NEXT ISSUE FEAR IN

STEPHEN KING COUNTRY

- **Our roving camera travels to Maine, USA, to find the locations of some of King's greatest novels in the first of a two-part series.**
- **BRIAN LUMLEY launches his latest novel, *Necroscope III: The Source*, with a fully-illustrated extract. Yes, you read it first in FEAR, folks.**
- **JAMES HERBERT reveals exclusive news of his new novel, celebrates the launch of *Haunted* in paperback and lets us loose in his fabulous London flat.**
- **STEVE NILES talks to Philip Nutman about the birth of Arcane, US adult comic creators.**

Just three terrific tastes of what is to come in the next monthly instalment.

FEAR Issue 8 On sale July 20

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COVER DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION BY **OLIVER FREY**

ISSN No. 0954- 8017

"Fear goes monthly"

You may not have realised yet – but we've gone monthly. Take a look at the front cover and investigate the loose change in your pocket. That's right, there's more of it and we've dropped one whole pound off our price.

If you read the last issue, you'll also notice other changes. Some of the regular features have been scrapped and we've give the magazine a newsier feel. 'Cut the crap,' you told us in our Issue 4 readership survey, so from now on we're going to make sure that we cram in as much film and book news as possible along with the regular profiles and reviews.

'You're only running two short stories an issue,' you might say. True, but we ran three in our bi-monthly issues so, in reality, you're gaining one story every two months.

Where's the Fear Factor? It'll be back on an irregular basis with some pretty heavy star names. And the *Prime Evil* competition will take place in October now to coincide with the British Fantasy Convention in Birmingham.

And there's more. For starters, we peek into the homes and working habitats of big name writers, directors and actors. **James Herbert** is our first victim next issue, closely followed by **Clive Barker**. We also have two **Stephen King** pictorial features which take a look at the locations for novels like *It* and *The Shining* – we even managed to sneak into the boiler room of the Overlook Hotel. Finally, we are tying up a series of deals to print more extracts from upcoming novels. Our first treat is from **Brian Lumley's** new super shocker *Necroscope III: The Source*.

So I hope you agree you can look forward to a pretty impressive summer and winter with **FEAR**. That's not to say we'll rest on our laurels. We haven't binned the letters page – so, if you've got anything you want to see in the magazine, write to us. We already have a fairly impressive record for fulfilling readers' desires.

Till next month – wah-hey, at last I can say it . . .

John Gilbert

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UNION HACK

THE FOG SPREADS

Congratulations to **James Herbert**, whose second novel, *The Fog*, has just sold one million paperback copies.

Only seven other authors in Britain, headed by **Jeffrey Archer**, have achieved sales of an individual title to that magic figure. All have been backed up by film or television tie-ins and massive support from all areas of the media. *The Fog* has had no such support. It has sold that many copies through word of mouth and the reputation of the author as a man who delivers what he promises.

Herbert admits that *The Fog* (1975) was written to see how far he could push the boundaries of horror. The year 1989 marks the thirtieth time that the book has been reprinted.

James Herbert, man in a million, with the Hodder and Stoughton crew

Herbert's publishers, Hodder and Stoughton, are obviously pleased. Unlike some authors who swap publishers with every book, Herbert has stayed with them from the beginning, refining and perfecting his art, working with them to produce better books.

The relationship obviously works and, if the superb hardback edition of *Haunted* is anthing to go by, is paying dividends. Herbert is mid way through his fourteenth novel and the paperback of *Haunted* is set for release in August. *The Fog* may be the first of Hrebert's books to top one million copies, but there are many more right on its tail.

FANTASY CONVENTION UPDATE

The World and British Fantasy Conventions are drawing nearer and now is the time to fill in some of the details about both events.

The British convention, FantasyCon XIV, will be held during the weekend 6-8 October atthe four-star Midland Hotel in Birmingham. The American guest is **Thomas F Monteleone**, a fabulous writer of short horror fiction whose novel is causing a stir among fans, while the British guest slot is filled by our own **Stephen Laws. Brian Lumley**, whose new novel *Necroscope III: The Source* is due out soon – see our next issue for an exclusive extract – will play host as Master of Ceremonies and, among other events, **FEAR** and Transworld publishers will be launching the *Prime Evil* short story competition.

Full attending membership costs £22.00 for BFS members, £25.00 for non-members. Supporting membership is £10.00. The hotel rates are £25.00 per night, excluding breakfast. Enquires should be addressed, with an SAE, to FantasyCon XIV, 15 Stanley Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DE, England.

The World Fantasy Convention 1989 will be held at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Seattle, on 29 October, 1989. The guests include **Ursula K Le Guin, S P Somtow, Robert R McCammon** and **Avram Davidson**. Toastmaster is **Ginjer Buchanan**.

Attending membership costs £70.00, supporting £30.00. Hotel rates and further information can be obtained with an SAE/IRC from John Douglas, Box 20261, Greeley Sq, Stn, New York, NY 10001, USA. We, of course, will be around to bring you coverage of both events.

HUMBLE PIE

Mistakes have crept into the last few issues of **FEAR** and here's where we'd like to put them right.

Firstly, the illustration of Pinhead placed in last issue's Image Animation piece should have been run alongside the news story about the *Hellraiser* comic. Credits should also have gone to Clive Barker, the copyright holder, John Bolton, artist, and Epic Comics, publishers of the comic.

We would also like to point out that the author of the Graham Masterton interview (Issue 5) was not, as stated, John Fraser, but David Whitehead.

Last issue's feature on Image Animation was also missing a name. It should have been credited to Brigid Cherry as well as Brian J Robb.

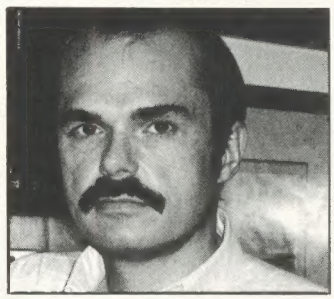
Similarly, our Renny Harlin interview was written by Juhani Nurmi and Peter Briggs.

Our apologies to all concerned. Blame is so easy to apportion, but be assured of our increased vigilance in future.

John Gilbert

KOONTZ TOUR CANCELLED

Dean R Koontz, best-selling author of the recently published novel *Midnight*, has had to cancel his massive UK promotional tour due to ill health.



The author has been ill for some time and was not well enough to travel. A spokeswoman for Headline, his British publishers, said: 'There's always next year, when a new hardback comes out, and we're hoping that he'll come over then'.

In the meantime, all of us at **FEAR** join his UK fans in wishing him a full recovery.

ROMERO RETURNS TO THE GRAVE

George Romero is to remake his gore classic *Night of the Living Dead* later this year.

Romero has rewritten the screenplay, the original screenwriter Jack Russo produces and ace special effects man and sometime cameo role artist Tom Savini directs.

The original low budget movie was made in the summer of 1968 with a bunch of unknown actors and a camera crew which was more used to working in offices. Despite its massive cult success a copyright cock-up meant that Romero saw little monetary reward for the movie. No doubt this venture will put all of that to rights.

Romero's other much bespoken project, **Stephen King's** *The Stand*, is slated for preproduction later this year. The project – if it takes off this time – represents a welcome return to King movies. Last year he handed the opportunity to direct *Pet Sematary* back to Paramount who, fortunately, gave it to Mary Lambert. That movie has since reached the number one chart position in the States and is likely to do the same next year when it arrives in the UK.

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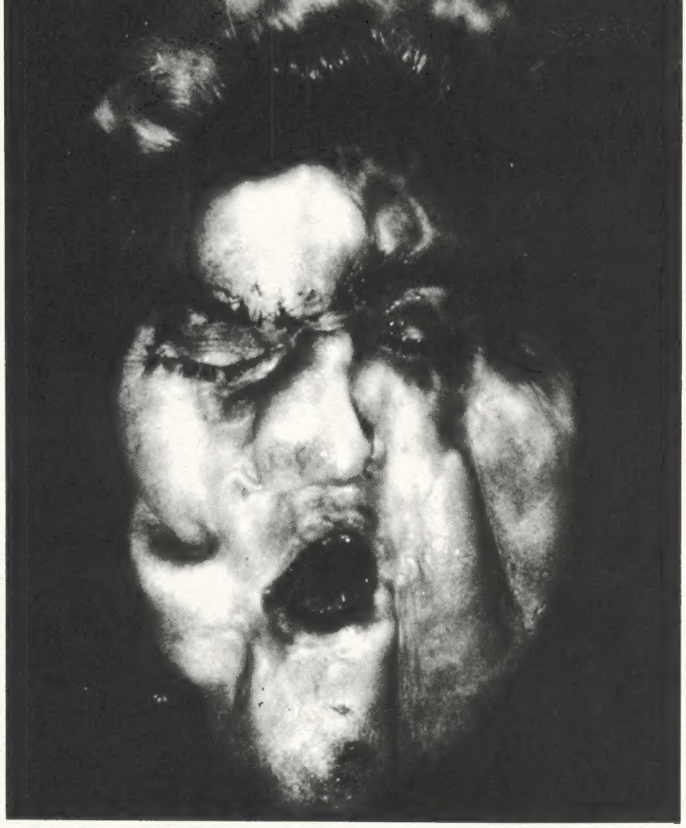

THE LAUGHING DEAD

Take one well-known horror writer, let him have complete control over a film production and let rip. The result is *The Laughing Dead*, which has been scripted and directed by *Vampire Junction* author **S P Somtow**.

Not such a strange occurance, you may say, pointing to films by Clive Barker and Stephen King, but when we tell you that most of the actors in this feature film are well-known authors you might have second thoughts. Those authors include **Forest J Ackerman, Tim Powers** and **William F Wu** – some of Somtow's best known friends, in fact.

The story is set against the Mexican Feast of the Dead and includes ancient Aztec curses, religious improprieties and a horde of zombies the like of which you've never seen before. Special effects are care of **John Buechler**, whose work on *Re-Animator* and *A Nightmares on Elm Street 3* and *4* makes him one of the best in the business.

(Watch out for next month's issue of **FEAR** when we'll be carrying an exclusive feature on the movie courtesy of Gregory Frost).

THE GREAT AND SECRET SHOW

Details of **Clive Barker's** new book, the first part of his trilogy *The Art*, have started to filter through as proof copies of the said work circulate.

Without giving too much away, *The Great and Secret Show* focuses on the dream life of America and, according to those who have read it, is the best thing he has ever written. Weighing in at more than 600 pages, it is comparable to *Weaveworld* but with a much wider scope. The book will appear from Collins in August and is followed by *Cabal 2* in January 1990.

Still on the Barker front, *Cabal* the novel is to be re-released and renamed *Nightbreed* when the film arrives in the UK – hopefully in March of next year. Two movie tie-in books are also on the cards: *The Making of . . .* and a colour monster book of the *Breed* will appear in September when the film is launched in the States. (See our *Nightbreed* set report on page 16).

Continuing the theme of movie tie-ins, **Michael Stewart's** original novel, *Monkey Shines*, is to be re-released by Fontana when the George Romero movie opens in the autumn. His next hardback, *Grace*, appears in July and deals with the miracle – or nightmare – of virgin birth.

CUP AND SOURCERY

Win a nice cuppa with your Sourcery!

TO MARK THE LAUNCH of Terry Pratchett's latest Discworld novel **Transworld** have kindly offered us **SIX** limited edition presentations which include a copy of the book and a special Sourcery and Pyramids mug – all packaged in a fabulous luggage box.

To win, just tell us ***the name of the wizard who died and so caused all the problems in Equal Rites.*** Jot your answer on a postcard or sealed envelope and send it to *Wizard Squared Competition, FEAR, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

All entries must be in by 15 July, 1989. Our usual competition rules apply.

NECROPOLIS

If it isn't horror, we don't have it! What we do have is everything the horror fan and connoisseur of the sinister and macabre could possibly want: videos from "2000 Maniacs" to "Zombie Creeping Flesh", horror jewellery and T-shirts, magazines from Fango to Deep Red, American genre books and horror comics, model kits including Jason and Freddy Krueger, Heavy Metal videos, masks, prosthetics, special FX, gore galore...here's just a taster...

2000 MANIACS. It might be BBFC certificated but it's still pure H.G.Lewis.Grab it and guffaw for £22.95

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 3. This video's now on sell-thru, with more FX than the first 2 put together. Grab one with a gloved hand for £9.99

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See You In Hell!

AMERICAN NIGHTMARES

PSYCHOS IN SUBURBIA

If you're searching for the Heart of Darkness, look no further. Our Stateside correspondent has found it, alive and sick . . . in suburbia.

DATELINE: Oak Beach, Long Island, June 1989.

The 'Burbs, Joe Dante's latest movie starring Tom Hanks, deals with the subject of suburbia in the form of an uneven black comedy. Though it can't be classified as a traditional horror movie, it is the first 'anti-horror' satire. The story involves Hanks with his 'rational' middle-class neighbours and their suspicions concerning the strange family that has moved into the house next door. All is not that it seems, however, and, to investigate, Hanks and company behave as strangely as the family of geeks across the way. As Hanks screams at the film's end, 'It's not them, it's us!!! We're the crazy ones, the weirdos!!' This hysterical rant rams home the movie's theme whilst mirroring the madness present in the suburbs.

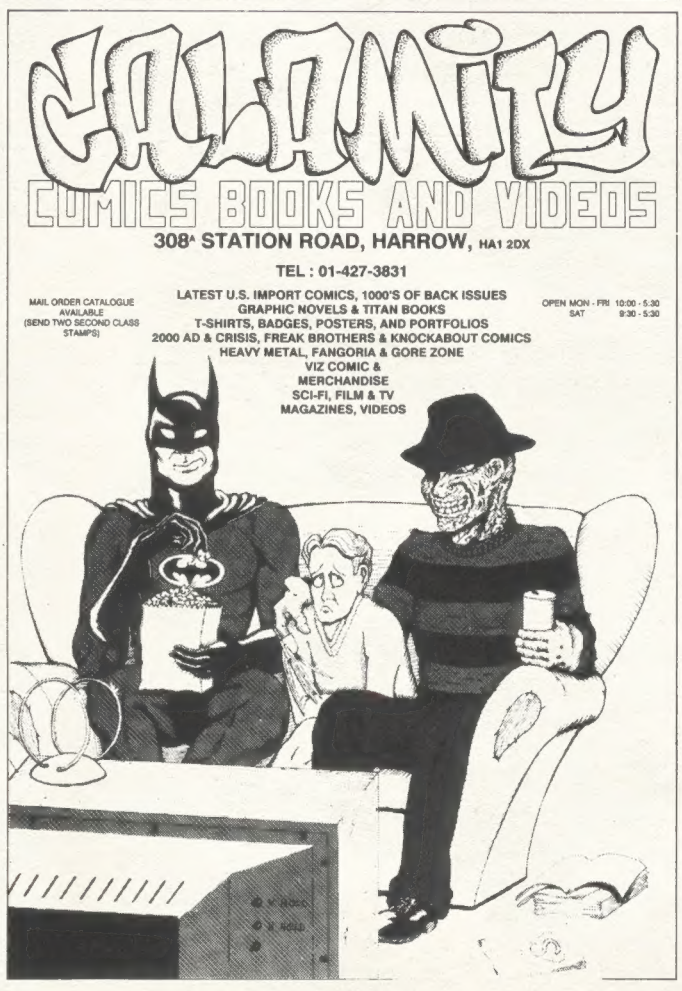
For example, on Long Island recently the number of reported child abuse and wife battering cases has increased alarmingly. In the first six weeks of this year no less than three divorced husbands killed their ex-wives and children before committing suicide, three teenage girls were raped and mutilated and drug-related incidents filled the newspapers each day. Being bombarded by this information does little for one's peace of mind. What are the folks next door doing? Did I lock my door? Was that a gun-shot I heard? So much for peace and quiet.

Less murderous, yet no less chilling, are the local shopping malls. Yes, *Dawn of the Dead* was true, they *are* full of consumerist zombies. George Romero – who is currently remaking *Night of the Living Dead* – was right. Not only that, mall life has caused the death of local communities.

Bay Shore, the nearest town to Oak Beach, Long Island, has become like King's *Salem's Lot* due to the influence of two shopping malls and fourteen shopping centres laid out around the highways that encircle the town like a noose. Main Street is a wasteland during the day but, if you're lucky, you might see a nocturnal figure or two shopping at the liquor store or entering one of the numerous delicatessans that pace out its three mile length. If the people who work the night shifts in the run down stores are less toothsome than King's vampiric small towners, they certainly resemble the zombie-like characters from Dennis Etchison's story *The Late Shift* – soulless entities that run 7-11's and all-night Burger Kings. Yes, it's a scary place out there. The suburbanites that wander the malls are definite cousins of Romero's walking dead, as they meander in their hypoglycemic, consumerist trances, and it seems the only thing that would induce any sign of life in these people is if there was a sudden ban on plastic money. As the mother of Kirsten (Patricia Arquette) stated to Heather Langenkamp in *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3*, 'Her nightmares started when I took away her credit cards'.

Indeed.

Next month I move back to Manhatten. I'll be safer there. At least I know every second person on the street is a psycho . . .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SHORT NOTICES

Director Tobe Hooper is back behind the cameras with *Spontaneous Combustion*, starring Brad Dourif (a man used to madness in such films as *Dune*, *Blue Velvet* and *Child's Play*). Dourif makes people explode in this strange tale penned by Hooper. Directors Mick Garris and John Landis are scheduled to make cameo appearances in the picture.

Since Hooper is heavily involved with this new project, it precludes any participation with *Leatherface: Texas Chainsaw Massacre 3*, due to shoot this summer from New Line.

Talking of sequels, *Child's Play II* is already in preproduction with Kevin Yagher, Freddy's regular make-up man, again handling the effects.

Mouth of Madness, written by New Line's Michael De Luca, one of the brains behind *Freddy's Nightmares*, looks like it will be the next movie from *Hellbound* director Tony Randel, or so the film-makers informed me while buying copies of **FEAR** in The Outer Limits, LA's newest SF/horror/comic book store. *Alcatraz 2000*, originally slated as his next project and scripted by Peter Atkins, is currently on hold at New World.

Also sighted in The Outer Limits was effects artist Mark Shostrom, buying – guess what? – copies of **FEAR** (shucks guys, you make me feel wanted – ED). Shostrom, who has been taking life at an easier pace since his year long involvement with *Phantasm II*, *Deep Star Six* and his directoral debut on *Laurel's Monsters*, is being pursued by several production companies to provide effects for some big budget pictures and has already turned down a stint on *A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child*.

Shostrom is also in demand as a director and pursuing three feature projects, one of which will utilise the talents at his effects facility. He also participated on Warren Beatty's hugely expensive *Dick Tracy* (with fellow luminaries John Caglione and Doug Drexler) for a short while at the start of the year and was enthusiastic about the considerable work being done on the project.

Things are pretty quiet in Hollywood on the special effects front due to the Tracy movie and the proposed *Gremlins* sequel, both of which are employing a large number of technicians. Although *Gremlins II* has yet to be given the green light, Academy Award winner Rick Baker has been at work on the film's effects during the past year, using the talents of seventy artists. He has another year of preparation for the film and Warner Bros are rumoured to have already spent $8 million dollars on the effects.

Budgets for movies are growing at an alarming rate and word is that *The Abyss*, the forthcoming SF film from *Aliens* director James Cameron, has already cost a phenomenal $51 million and is still on its way to post-production.

If movie budgets seem astronomical, the same can be said of book advances. Thomas Harris, author of *Black Sunday*, *Red Dragon* (filmed as *Manhunter*) and its semi-sequel, *The Silence of the Lambs* (reviewed last issue), recently signed a $5.25 million advance deal with Dell Publishing for his next two novels, the first of which will not appear until 1992.

The deal, engineered by his agent Mort Janklow, one of the top book powerbrokers, was organised after he interested Gene Hackman in *The Silence of the Lambs* as a movie project. That book was sold for a £750,000 advance to St Martin's Press, a healthy figure for an author of Harris's standing.

Orion Pictures have purchased the movie rights for an unspecified six-figure sum. Whether or not the film is made is academic at this point – Hackman is unlikely to play the role of Lektor – but each new book would have to sell 200,000 copies in hardback and 1.6 million in paperback just for Dell to break even on the deal.

TV HORROR – MORE TO COME

Though the CBS network has again cancelled the revival of *The Twilight Zone*, made by MGM/UA, due to low ratings, the producers are planning further anthology shows. First up may be *Poltergeist: The Series*. Whilst on the subject, MGM/UA have no plans to revive *The Outer Limits*, a much discussed project that appears to have been buried under the weight of corporate indecision.

Elsewhere on the networks, it now seems certain that the second season of *Freddy's Nightmares* will be cancelled despite press announcements in other magazines. Although the show has proved to be a winner on local television stations, the overall ratings have disappointed national executives, a situation not helped by conflicting attitudes between New Line and Lorimar Television concerning the series content. *Safe Sex*, an episode penned by David Schow which marked his small screen debut, was censored by Lorimar to the tune of seven minutes after the director delivered his final cut. The decision came as a surprise to Schow and the director, as Lorimar had approved all four drafts of the script.

Anthology shows on cable stations appear to be faring better than their network counterparts, however, and the USA Network have ordered a further twelve episodes of *The Ray Bradbury Theatre*, all of which will be penned by Bradbury from his own short fiction. Also renewed by the same station is *The Hitchhiker*, their adult-oriented horror/suspense series – twenty-six episodes are planned.

A project that has been in on again/off again development limbo for more than three years is *Tales From the Crypt*, based on the controversial EC Comics of the Fifties. The option has been picked up by cable giant Home Box Office as a half hour show. Produced by former *Tales From the Darkside* executive Bill Teitler, the pilot is helmed by big hitters Walter Hill, Richard Donner and Robert Zemeckis.

The fact that EC-inspired *Creepshow 2* was not a box office hit has not deterred Laurel Entertainment from planning a *Creepshow* series in conjunction with Columbia Television. No details were available at press time but a source at Laurel promises FEAR an exclusive if it gets the green light.

Meanwhile, Laurel are putting the final touches to a new deal for a second season of *Monsters*, their most recent anthology which has done excellently in the ratings war. Though the quality of some episodes has been a great disappointment considering the talents involved, three shows stick in my mind: Michael Gornick's *The Feaver Man*, Mark Shostrom's directoral debut, *Rouse Him Not*, and stop-motion animator Ernest Farino's debut, *Mannequins of Horror* (from the classic Robert Bloch story). The Farino episode rates as one of the best examples of television horror in over a decade.

FILMS IN PRODUCTION

DICK TRACY *Touchstone/Mulholland*
Producer/Director: Warren Beatty. Screenplay: Bo Goldman. Starring: Warren Beatty, Madonna, Glenne Headley, George C Scott, Al Pacino, William Hickey, Michael J Pollard.

STEPFATHER II *Part II Productions*
Executive Producer: Carol Lampman. Producers: Darin Scott, William Burr. Director: Jeff Burr. Screenplay: John Auerbach. Starring: Terry O'Quinn, Meg Foster, Jonathan Brandis.

THE LIFE AND LOVES OF A SHE-DEVIL *Orion*
Producer: Jonathan Brett. Director: Susan Seidelman. Screenplay: Barry Strugatz, Mark Burns. Starring: Meryl Streep, Roseanne Barr, Ed Begley Jr, Linda Hunt, Sylvia Miles.

FRIDAY THE 13TH PART VIII: JASON IN NEW YORK
Producer: Randy Cheveldave. Director/Screenplay: Rob Hedden. Starring: Peter Mark Richmond (obviously run out of victims).

SHOCKER (NO MORE MR NICE GUY) *Alive Films*
Executive Producers: Wes Craven, Shep Gordon. Producer: Marianne Maddalena. Director/Screenplay: Wes Craven. Starring: Michael Murphy, Peter Berg, Mitch Pileggi, Cami Cooper, Sam Scarber, Richard Brooks, Ted Raimi, Vincent Guastaferro, Kane Roberts, Timothy Leary.

They live by night – and they write letters by day. We've got a column to fill with your cryptic comments and loathsome lines, so sharpen that quill and get scribbling. Send letters or artwork to RAISING THE DEAD, FEAR, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.

A DEAD ISSUE

Dear **FEAR**
I wonder if you could help me. A few days ago I went to hire *Evil Dead* from our local video shop and was most disappointed to be told that both *Evil Dead* and *Evil Dead 2* have been banned.

I find this rather stupid as the films have been readily available for quite a while and I have seen them both.

Could you please tell me if this is true?
Alan Oughton, Milford Haven
PS: I have bought all six copies of your magazine and intend to carry on buying for as long as you carry on printing.

The answer is that it's half true. Evil Dead is banned and likely to remain so. But this is not the case with Evil Dead 2, which is set to be released on video sell-through and will be available very soon through HMV record shops (well, those that stock videos) around the country. And, because you're one of the **FEAR** *faithful, let me tell you that Evil Dead 3 is in the pipeline – currently shooting in Cornwall and Scotland – and we'll be bringing you the latest on this as soon as we can.*

SPECIAL TRAINING

Dear **FEAR**
I have a desperate ambition to work on film special effects and would be eternally grateful if you could let me know how to get in touch with Image Animation featured recently in your magazine.
Susanna Luck, Winchelsea

Dear **FEAR**
I am writing to ask for any information on jobs in and around the special effects and make-up side of films and television.

I am very interested in finding future employment in this line of work.
Martin Gibbins, Hitchin

For all the people out there who feel the pull of prosthetics, we have an article by Bob Keen and Geoff Portass planned for a forthcoming issue in which they'll explain how to get into the special effects business and tell of the big names who have made it. However, if you can't wait that long, Image Animation are based at Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver, Buckinghamshire SL0 0NH.

HOOKED ON CLIVE

Dear **FEAR**
I'm sure I won't be the only **FEAR** reader around to say – please – more **Clive Barker**! I'm happy to say that so far you've fed my appetite . . . but I'm beginning to hunger!

Please could we have more information on forthcoming short stories, novels such as *Cabal*'s two sequels or *The Art* and its two sequels, collaborations, interviews and film updates.

How about a set report on the forthcoming *Nightbreed*?

I read in Issue Five of **FEAR** that they hope to release *Nightbreed* in America by August. What about us?
Dave Brown, Basildon

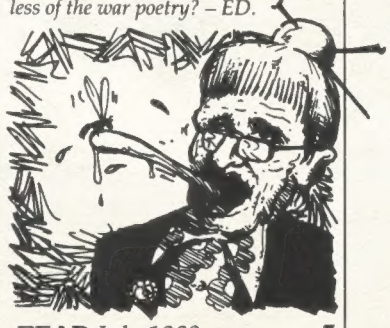
The Great and Secret Show: Part 1 of The Art is wonderful, but you'll have to wait until October for its release from Collins. As for Nightbreed, we hope to have at least one interview/feature about it per month right up to its release at the end of the year.

RHYMING SLANG

Dear **FEAR**
There was an old lady who swallowed a fly,
I don't know why she swallowed a fly,
Perhaps she was related to Seth Brundell.
Spring-Heeled Jack, Runcorn

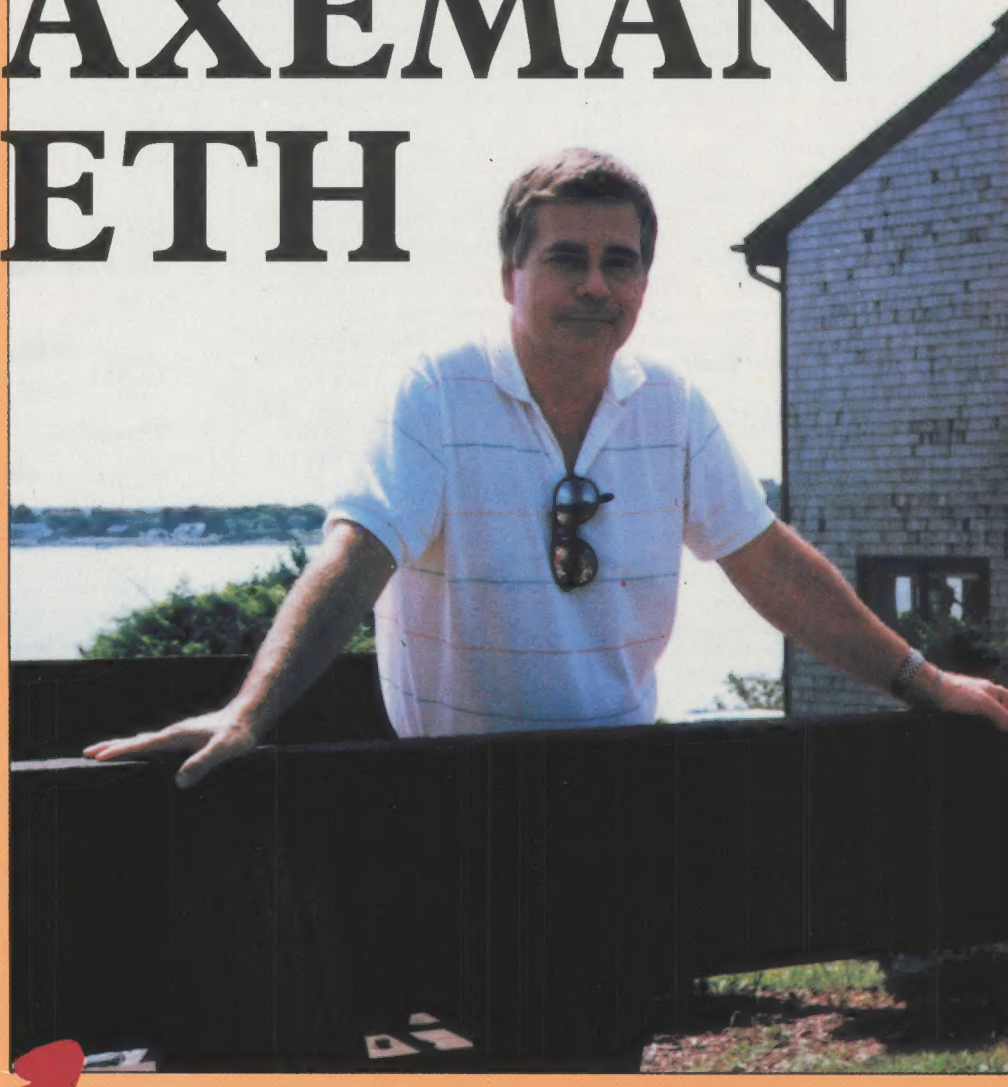
Dear **FEAR**
I would like to discuss the important issues raised in Spring-Heeled Jack's controversial poem in Issue Six.
Jack, Jack,
Your poem was crap.
Fred could eat Jason for breakfast.
The Marquis of Waterford, Runcorn

Now, come on guys, could we have less of the war poetry? – ED.



THE AXEMAN COMETH

John Farris was writing successful horror when Stephen King and Clive Barker were still at school. Despite three decades in the horror genre as a novel and screen writer, he has never lost an opportunity to be provocative, unsettling or controversial. Child rape, demonic possession and the misuse of psychic powers by governmental agencies were all areas covered first by Farris. Here Stanley Wiater talks to the man who Stephen King unashamedly describes as 'America's premier novelist of terror'.



Although widely recognised as one of the major talents in horror and dark suspense, John Farris still remains something of a mystery man. Since 1956, his twenty-seven books have twenty million copies in print worldwide, although he has granted few interviews to promote that work. He is perhaps best known for his 1976 novel, *The Fury*, which became a successful film the following year. Some of its success, no doubt, was because Farris wrote the screenplay. He also wrote and directed an earlier independent feature, *Dear Dead Deliah* in 1972. (Yet another novel, *When Michael Calls*, became a television movie in 1969; Farris, however, had no direct involvement with that project.)

If you were to suspect that this best-selling novelist has more than a passing interest in film-making you'd be right for, with the exception of two books, he has written screenplays for – or has options on – such popular titles as *Sharp Practice*, *Shatter*, *The Uninvited*, *Nightfall* and *Son of the Endless Night*.

In a career which began in the 1950's with mystery paperback originals, Farris now ranks alongside the very best the horror genre has to offer with such memorable works as *The Captors*, *All Heads Turn When the Hunt Goes By* and *Minotaur*. His first collection of short fiction, *Scare Tactics*, is published by NEL this month and is being expanded for US paperback publication later this year.

Born in Missouri, the soft-spoken author/poet/screenwriter/director lives in Georgia. When I spoke to him, he was simultaneously involved in more projects than most writers would dare to tackle in a lifetime.

"I would be hard pressed to write anything that would equal the stuff which shows up on television these days. Or to imagine it, really"

COMMITTED

SW You've been writing successful horror and suspense novels since the 1960s. Have you ever lost interest in exploring the dark side of the human condition?

JF I'm very interested in what turns on the spigot for the dark side that is in all of us, and starts it flowing. A lot of people got through life without ever experiencing that in themselves; yet others get into situations which cause radical changes in personality.

There's apparently an endless supply of situations – as reported in the media. I would be hard pressed to write anything that would equal the stuff which shows up on television these days. Or to imagine it, really.

I don't know whether it's due to the miracle of modern communication or if there are simply more aberrations cropping up, but some of the things that go on . . . Not too far from where I live, a guy abducted a six-year-old girl from her bedroom at 2:30 in the morning, took her into the woods, and raped her. The parents hadn't locked the back door. Fortunately, she's going to live. The rapist was visiting in the neighbourhood, and had a history of small crimes, but what he did to this little girl was a big move up for him at age 31. Where does this sort of middling evil come from, and why? There are few total psychotics in the world, those who should be committed for what they are capable of doing or what they have done, such as Ted Bundy or the Hillside Strangler. Although such people are rarities, this side of human nature is what fascinates me.

SW Are you ever concerned with such a fate for yourself, dealing with such grim topics day after day?

JF If I was going to go crazy, I would have done it by now. But it can get depressing. The novel I just finished, *The Axeman Cometh*, which is about an axe murderer, obviously has some depressing aspects. At one point in the book I couldn't proceed. I knew what was coming, I had planned it, it was central to the book – but when I came to it, I just didn't want to do it! I liked the people I needed to get rid of. I had spent a lot of time with these characters, and for the first time since I started writing, I simply could not do something that I had to do. I got to feeling very morbid about this, and I was not fun to be around. Like an actor getting deeply into a role; you can imagine Laurence Olivier playing Richard III and how much fun he must have been around the house after the show.

"Movies done by a committee are dreadful. I made the decision years ago I wouldn't option any novels of mine that I really cared for"

SW Which three of your novels would you recommend to someone sampling the work of John Farris for the first time?

JF *Sharp Practice* and *Shatter* for sure. Those are variations on suspense. The third one's kind of tough . . . I guess I would recommend they go into something lengthier and more intense, which would be *Son of the Endless Night*. But it's difficult to choose between that one and *All Heads Turn When the Hunt Goes By*.

HOT PROPERTIES

SW *Son of the Endless Night* is generally considered one of your finest, and most frightening, works. How close is it to being brought to the screen?

JF It's been turned down by every studio in Hollywood. They don't want to make a movie about demonic possession. They say it's not a 'hot' subject right now.

SW It would seem to me to be the project to go after, since Hollywood is always seeking to make something as wildly successful in that vein as *The Exorcist*.

JF I think so. You think so. But they don't.

SW Even so, you're about to go into production with two independent features, which you'll both write and direct?

JF Yes. *Nightfall* is based on a book I did a couple of years ago, and we're scheduled to start filming in Florida at the end of May. We're now raising money for *Shatter*, which I wrote several years ago. The *Nightfall* budget will be about three-and-a-half million, *Shatter* will come in for seven million. It's a question now of how I'm going to balance my life, because there are four films that I would like to do. The others would be *Sharp Practice*, which would be filmed partially in England and the rest in Canada. The last one is a little up in the air right now, but I think I would like to do *The Uninvited*. I have a good screenplay for that.

SW In terms of time and energy, do you think you can afford to direct all of these projects, or just one or two of them?

JF I'll be in charge of all of them and I would probably direct at least two. They would be *Nightfall* and *Sharp Practice*. It takes about a year out of your life if you're directing a feature, and because I'm writing, directing and overseeing the projects, it's a full year for each from preproduction to the answer print.

SW Then, regrettably, it'll be a while before we see any more novels with the byline 'by John Farris'?

JF No, even that's not full-time work. I'll still do a book a year. I spend about three hours a day writing; my concentration is such that I can produce a book in about three or four months.

TALENT FOR TERROR

SW So you're not intending to sacrifice one career for another?

JF I need to do both. If I were just making films – well, I need to do the writing. That's basic with me. Yet nothing but writing drives me crazy – and three hours a day is not enough to keep me occupied. So this is a nice mix, if I can do it.

SW Since you've done both, is there any major difference in writing suspense for the screen, as opposed to writing suspense for the printed page?

JF You have to fulfil the audience's expectations – and very quickly – or you're dead. It all depends on how you fulfil them and that goes back to talent and technique. The crafting of any movie is really tough. Screen comedy is probably the most difficult form of film-making, with suspense a close second. To be brief, I want to do my own films because I know how to do them better than anyone else. Movies done by a committee are dreadful. I made the decision years ago I wouldn't option any novels of mine that I really cared for.

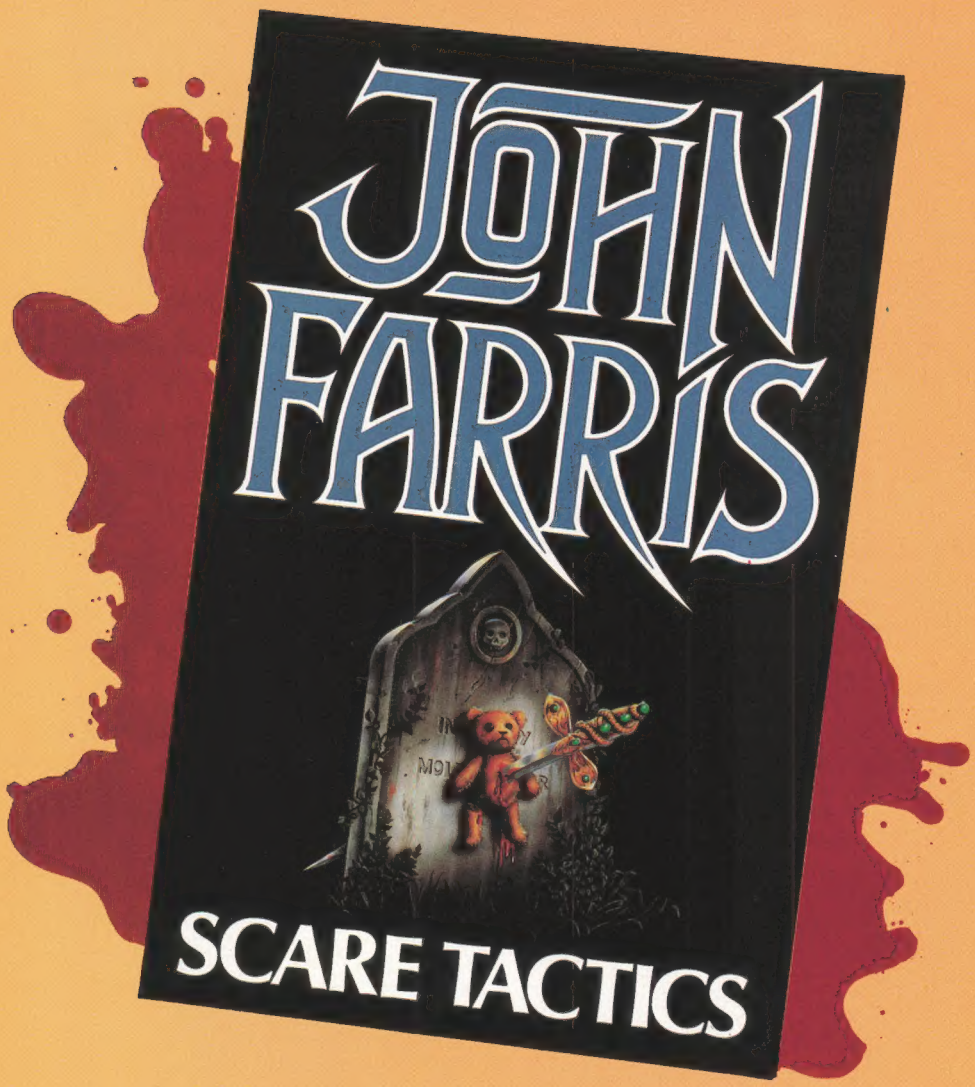
SW Some of our readers may be surprised at how rationally you approach this very personal and emotional profession. What advice do you have for someone who is considering following your path as a professional writer?

JF Writing is a job. It is plain hard work. Anyone who's gone to college and written terms papers knows what I mean. Just think of doing it every day, five days a week. Or three days one week and four another – whatever schedule suits you. Just as long as you do have a schedule, and even if you have a job on the side – which most people must have when they're beginning to write seriously.

I run every morning before I go to work.

"In the thousands of horror stories that have been published, how many scenes truly make the reader's skin crawl?"

I hate running, but I do it because it's beneficial and I know other good things are going to come because of it. When you come out cold, saying to yourself 'I can't do this today,' the first couple of laps are murder. Then you get yourself into a groove and find that the experience becomes pretty mechanical, if not enjoyable. It's that way when you sit down to write something as long and difficult as a novel. Doesn't matter whether you can do it better in the morning or better at night, you have to



establish a regular time to write. It may be a paragraph or a page, who knows? But if you stay with it the pages pile up, and you'll write a book. I know that, as much as I don't like to sit down some mornings and look at the word processor, still the pages will happen. (I'm all for word processors; writing is a damn chore no matter what, and anything you can find to make it easier, latch on to it. Can you imagine how it was

"When you lead a reader up to that moment you've got to give him something – you can't just cut to the corpse lying back at the morgue"

when they wrote with a quill pen?) You should have a routine and no expectations. Just see what happens.

SW Can you give an example of something occurring with 'no expectations'?

JF The book I'm finishing now, *The Axeman Cometh*, began as a story. I thought of the premise the day before I started to write. Originally it was two short stories which came together in my mind as one and which I planned for the expanded paperback version of *Scare Tactics*. I conceived the story on the 14th of August, sat down to write it on the 15th, and tomorrow, on the 24th of October, it'll be done as a full-length novel. I didn't know when I sat down this would happen! Although I always had a notion of where I meant to go with the idea, I didn't know who most of the characters were until they popped up while I was writing. My expectation was only that I wanted to find out what happened next.

SEX OBJECT

SW Since you've had the experience of writing horror for more than twenty years, have you yet to find any boundaries which you feel shouldn't be crossed?

JF It's all in how you approach the material. In *Son of the Endless Night* I had a sex scene between a 12-year-old girl and the protagonist which could be interpreted as pretty gamey. But one of the keys to the scene is that she's *not human*, which some critics seem to overlook. Also, at that point in the novel I needed to get about as far down into the depths of degradation and evil as it is possible to go. In the thousands of horror stories that have been published, how many scenes truly make the reader's skin crawl?

We've had an abundance of things crawling out from under beds and popping out of closets. Even though my novel dealt with supernatural themes I had to be very careful and choosy about graphically illustrating the point I wanted to make. No way to try to handle the scene 'tastefully'. So I did not. It was about as pornographic as you can find in fiction. I haven't had too much feedback on it; a couple of fellow authors thought I really had gone too far. They're right. I think I really extended the boundaries about as far as anyone's going to in this century.

SW You're certainly aware of the so-called 'splatterpunk' movement, in which one of the main reasons for the story's existence is precisely that: to see how far the boundaries of sex and violence can be pushed in the genre.

JF There are writers out there – I know a few and I've read a few – who pile on the gore. But it's not particularly creative and a lot of talent is required to make it work. I do believe I have a knack for describing the horrible without labouring the point.

SW Yes, but you're not a shrinking violet at describing explicit scenes of violence. In the story *Horrorshow* for your *Scare Tactics* collection, the scene in which the girl is attacked is incredibly brutal.

JF Go back and read it again and find all the brutal paragraphs. I think there's a total of *one*. The rest is anticipation of that specific paragraph. It's not as if I spent eight pages having the killer jump up and down on her head. That's precisely the point I'm trying to make. When you lead a reader up to that moment you've got to give him something – you can't just cut to the corpse lying back at the morgue. Doesn't work anymore. It's a scene which has to be shown somewhat graphically, but there's a degree beyond which you don't have to describe it any further. I think I reach that middle ground. I'm not particularly fond of long scenes of bloodshed; how many ways can you really do it, anyway?

When I get into violence – something that's really terrible – I want it to be memorable. Because I can bring considerable power to bear on just such a situation, I do. I want the reader shaken and helpless, not to continue reading. I don't pull any punches, but I don't look for opportunities just to gross people out.

SCHOOL FOR SPLATTER

SW Yes, but this 'splatterpunk' movement seems to be increasingly popular.

JF Popular with whom? You might as well ask why are the *Friday the 13th* films so popular.

SW Please explain, then.

JF Well, they're big with nine and ten-year-old kids who don't take it seriously – and I'm not sure that's good. My point is there are people who will see this kind of film or read that kind of book because that's what they enjoy all the time. I sincerely hope they'll mature and go on to other things.

SW Before you turned to horror and dark suspense, you had a successful career as a writer when most of us would still be daydreaming about such a career. Just how young were you when you published your first novel?

JF Eighteen. I sold my first book the summer I was out of high school. It was published under a pen-name about a year later. I had three novels published in 1956. I was involved in playwriting in New York for a time and I've done a hell of a lot of screenwriting. But I try to produce at least a novel a year.

SW Of course, now that you're a 'brand-name' author, you're able to start slowing down?

JF Sure. Right now I'm doing the final revision on the screenplay for *Nightfall*, I'm budgeting another picture, I'm finishing *The Axeman Cometh*, I'm two-thirds of the way through the novel *Fiends*, which I'll finish in May, I'm one-third of the way through a novel called *One of Your Children* and next week I'll start the title story for the expanded paperback version of *Scare Tactics*. So, basically that's what I'll be doing between now and late spring.

LOOK, SEE...

An Original Hellraiser Short Story

BY NICHOLAS VINCE

Look, see: I was, am, The Chatterer. A stand-up comic, right? I mean, I was the most successful guy you're ever likely to meet, and then some. Your ma and pa would remember the act and at least half a dozen of the movies. They were smash hits when they were released, people were literally fighting to get a ticket. Look, in my home town, New York, in 1931 they had to call in the police to stop a riot when two hundred people couldn't get a ticket. And that was only my second film and I was only 19.

Look, have you ever noticed that all stand-up comics are ugly? Think about it. Name me a really good-looking stand-up. A guy who you'd cream your pants for or who you'd want to look like. You can't. Right? They all look odd and most are under five six. That's why they're stand-up: to compensate for their ugly mug. Look, see: that's why they all started cracking jokes – I mean who cares if a guy's ugly if he's making you laugh? I guarantee they all can tell you how they started cracking gags to stop being picked on in school. Hope, Durante, all three Marx Brothers, Abbot and Costello . . . not a single good-looker amongst them. Beauty just ain't funny.

Excepting me, of course. I was beautiful in bold type. That was my gimmick, that and the way I could talk forty to the dozen. Look, see: those other guys were always as pure as the driven snow in the material they used on film. They saved the other stuff for the after dinner appearances and cabaret circuits. Not me, though. I'd tell jokes about niggers and cripples, Jews, spics and commies right there on the celluloid. And because I was beautiful I got away with it. The funny and the beautiful are always forgiven.

Look, I didn't go so far that the Hays Office was going to throw me out of Hollywood, but in every film there was always a couple of gags the other guys wouldn't have touched if their cocks were on fire.

When I told one of these gags I had this way of looking at the camera. It had the women wetting the seats and the fairies passing out on the floor. Okay, so I didn't have a lot of regular guys as fans but I had more than half the population who thought I was a saint. Besides, the speed I said it you were never sure you'd heard me right.

My face advertised more products than I can remember and it was analysed time and again by critics. It was my green eyes that really got them. Okay, so you couldn't see them in black-and-white, but they still doubled the sales of any product who used me. Look, some professor made measurements from my publicity shots and said my features were in the same proportion as Michaelangelo's David. The gossip writers said my eyes were 'piercing', or 'looked right through people'. One even said, 'he can skewer the soul of anyone he meets with a single glance.' Pathetic, right? But it kept the offers rolling in. And that kept me in Beverly Hills.

Look, see: I had a wicked line in practical jokes. At one time I found it funny to inform the House Un-American Activities Committee of people who were entirely innocent, but who had upset me. It was a great joke: innocents defending themselves against my paid witnesses who swore blind they weren't. The beauty of the gag was in watching the jerks suffer and the pompous bastards of the Committee being fooled into punishing them. But even that was too easy. People like believing the worst of anyone and the 'witch hunts' were the perfect way to settle old scores – and you were called 'patriotic' for betraying your friends. I suppose I ruined half-a-dozen lives directly and destroyed as many families. Since then, one or two have proved their innocence but I wasn't around to suffer the consequences.

I was twenty-eight when I got bored. Look, see: I'd done it all. I'd made over thirty films in ten years – with time out to entertain the troops during Hitler's attempt to re-organise Europe and, although I was paying alimony to two ex-bitches, hush money to three under-age aspiring actresses and was supporting a coke habit, it was all *too easy*. I could throw money at any problem and away it trotted. Yeah, some came back snapping at my heels but it just needed more money and away they'd go again.

Like I said, I was bored and that lead to my escape. Aw, but you want to know about the Box, don't you? The puzzle box: Lemarchand's Lament Configuration. Perhaps one of, no definitely *the* greatest practical joke I've ever seen. Firstly it's not a box. No siree. Look, see: a box has a space inside where you might put something. Even the Chinese puzzle boxes all have a compartment inside to contain a reward for solving the puzzle. But not the Lament Configuration: it's solid, I don't mean it's solid because of the working parts – there aren't any. None. It's just a hunk of wood with some pretty fancy brass inlay work.

Unless, of course, you want it to be something else. A key, for instance. That's what I wanted it to be. A key to new experiences. Look, see: I'd had everything money could buy – tasted every forbidden fruit, dallied with every degradation and, like I said, turned to sheer viciousness as a form of release. I'd heard of Lemarchand's box and what it meant and I wanted to know if it was true. Look, see: if you've tried everything the world has to offer you must turn to another world.

I don't know why I was chosen as one of the Order of the Gash. One of the Cenobites. Perhaps I was prettier than most of those who solve the box. Perhaps I was just plain nasty. Who knows? I'd long since learnt that the world is casual in its choice of victims.

THE CHATTERER requires no introduction to those of you who know Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* films or have read *The Hellbound Heart* novella. He's the Cenobite hitman from Hell and, with his playmates Pinhead, Butterball and The Female Cenobite, enjoys the pleasure of causing pain.

"That's when I noticed they were all wearing these nicely-laced outfits – nicely-laced to their skin, that is."

for brutality. Anyway, a Cenobite is what I became.

There were three who answered my summons. The big boss, the 'Lord of the Configuration'; he wore a crown not of thorns but of nails. Except it wasn't just his head they were in, but all over his face; at the intersections of some criss-cross scars. Very nice too. Their symmetry fascinated me. That and realising they must actually be hammered into the bone of his skull. I let out a low whistle of admiration. This was obviously one mean guy.

His lady friend weren't too pretty either. Her throat reminded me of a biology lesson where I'd had to dissect a frog and pin the flaps of skin to a board. Again I noticed the pains she'd taken to get her jewellery just so. Just like any other broad. Not my type, though. I mean she was bald except for a few wisps of hair and she didn't exactly have 'come to bed' eyes, more like 'come to the grave'. I guessed she probably took 'rat poison on the rocks'.

The other guy reminded me of Greenstreet. He didn't say anything, just kept licking his lips and fingering the wound his belly. That's when I noticed they were all wearing these nicely-laced outfits – nicely-laced to their skin, that is.

Sheesh, I wished I'd thought of having a bottle of Jack Daniels handy. Look, see: I'd always accompanied my love wrestling with it and it felt appropriate for what these guys were obviously about to offer. As it turned out I was way, way out in my estimation. And, buddy, it hurt. I mean, the sort of pain you dupes can't even begin to imagine.

It was all the handiwork of The Engineer. I suppose he might have been human once – if he was it must have been eons ago. Look, see: if you can imagine a large scorpion, with the skin of a leprous baby, the eyes of an angry tiger and the mouth of a great white shark. You can? You must have met the mother-in-law. Anyway, not the sort of guy to meet in a dark alley, which is exactly where I did meet him: in an alleyway of Hell.

The worst was when my eyes went. He slit my nose and twisted the flaps of skin across; so my eyeballs were crushed back into my skull. He smashed the

exposed bone and gristle and covered the mess with a patch of skin from the back of my head. He hacked off my ears and fed fish hooks into my mouth so that my lips were pulled back. These hooks were attached by wires to other hooks which he put in the edge of the wound in the back of my head.

The punchline is: I don't know if I died. I should have done. No-one can survive that sort of treatment and he didn't stop with my face. His taste in leather costumes ain't the most comfortable. (I felt every wound, they've never healed and I'm still in pain. I'm still chattering alright – it's the only companion I have here, the noise of my teeth.

It makes me real mad. I want to destroy everything in sight, well reach, anyway. There's nothing like tearing someone to shreds for taking your mind off your troubles. But, it's only every so often I'm allowed to play with those who open the Box. Those who don't interest the others – the dull and the stupid, mostly. I'm not as choosy as they are. But there are never enough. So I spend most of my time mad. And in the Labyrinth.

Sheesh, you have to admire the architect of that place. His sense of humour is terrific. Should have been a gag writer. Better than half-a-dozen I could name.

Those of you cognizant with your mythology will know that Labyrinth is a fancy word for maze. And that's all Hell is. I mean I've seen those pictures about that guy Dante's Inferno. He must have been on some good stuff because it ain't anything like the way they showed it in the movies.

I mean, I do like his gag about Hope. You know the one? Where he says above the gates there's this motto. 'Abandon Hope all ye who enter here'. Well let me tell you, there's more hopefuls here than on a casting couch. They're all hoping to get out. Poor saps.

Look, see: Hell is a place of corridors. Right? All the ocrridors are similar, no two are the same. The walls are damp, grey stone, the floors sand. The roots of trees frame arches to break the monotony. There are no windows to the outside world, but don't go thinking there ain't any light in Hell. There's plenty. At the end of every tunnel there is a light. Around every corner there is a glow suggesting freedom. A tantalising promise that an escape exists. It don't. Its builders must have found every possible way to build a junction, so that a guy is always confronted with more than a simple choice of left or right. Of course, once they've chosen they're always left wondering: 'What lies in those other directions? If I'd taken that other tunnel wouldn't I be free now?' So they hurry back to where they turned to find a new set of choices or a dead end. Look, see: the architecture of the Labyrinth ain't static. Unseen hands alter its routes so the Labyrinth has no maps, no system or logic for a mind to grasp and apply order to the chaos. And they search on, all thought of previous choices is confounded by the new quandary presented. And still the glow of freedom beckons from every avenue. Look, see: you never find someone huddled in a corner, having given up, full of despair. That would be too easy and it ain't allowed. Despair is a release that only flickers at the edge of consciousness. Nice gag eh? You might say they all live hopefully ever after.

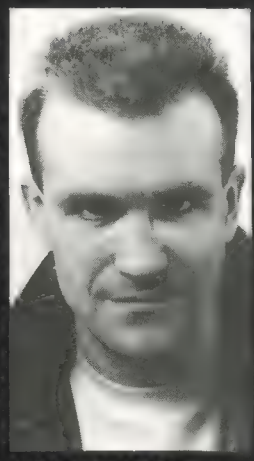
Of course, there are others in the Labyrinth, aside from them that wander the corridors. The wanderers are the stupid ones I told you about before. The ones whose flesh I get to play with.

For the others, there are more complicated torments, more ingenious reflections of their life deeds. The greater the intellect and the sins, the more subtle the torture. They have their own private chambers with their own particular type of room service. The punishment they earned in life is acted for the amusement of the hierachy of the Labyrinth. And it's all in perfect flesh-toned Tormento-Vision.

Look, see: there *are* stock sufferings, kind of 'off the peg' torments: disembowelling and evisceration, gouging out of eyes, ripping out of tongues, hanging by the thumbs or hair, stretching on the rack, thumbscrews, strappado, squassation, tearing out of nails and teeth, flaying of the skin, burning the soles of the feet, insertion of red hot pokers, tearing the flesh with red hot pincers, severing and crushing of limbs, dipping in butts of boiling pitch or scalding lime and scrubbing with wire brushes (all without the aid of anaesthetic).

Then there are the more complex (some would say gratuitous) sufferings: slitting open an eye with a cut-throat razor, driving stakes through the heart, putting a guy's hand in chip fryer, stabbing people through shower curtains when dressed as your mother, splashing acid in the faces of composers, skewering vicars with lightning conductors and decapitation with sheets of plate glass, feeding critics 'pet poodle pie', turning the heads of 16-year-old girls through 360 degrees, feeding great white sharks on bimbo bathers, cutting up teenagers with chainsaws, getting a guy to cut off his hand with a chainsaw, invisibly hanging a guy with the bed linen in his jail cell, drowning a guy in a vat of gumbo and – my personal favourite – pulling a guy to pieces with hooks on the ends of chains. You get the picture?

Of course, now they've made movies of some of the Box's stories. They're quite good. They've got lots of things right and most of them wrong. I mean, they've tried to say I was a kid when I opened the box – nice try, but no Kewpie Doll. But what can you expect from movie people? In the scale of things a movie writer's soul is roughly equivalent to that of an inebriated gnat. A movie producer's is worth slightly less. I bet you can imagine some of the things we have lined up for them when they get down here. In fact, you know CB? Look, see: if you see the guy, you can give him a message from the Order of the Gash. Tell him: 'We're waiting'.



NICHOLAS VINCE may not be so well known though he's chattered his way through both *Hellraiser* movies and has just finished work on the new Barker fantasy film, *Nightbreed*. Nick also writes fiction, as witnessed by this chilling short story about the creation of a Cenobite. He's the obvious person to tell such a tale which, we think you'll agree, fits like a piece of puzzle into the *Hellraiser* mythos.

"I'm still in pain . . . I'm still chattering alright – it's the only companion I have here, the noise of my teeth."

THE FINAL CUT:

EDITING HELLB

Editors are the unsung heroes of fantasy cinema. They have to edit a film in a way that maintains the suspense and ensures that the shocks are shocking. Entrusted with this responsibility on Hellbound – and on Hellraiser before it – is film industry veteran Richard Marden. Here he talks to Brigid Cherry and Brian J Robb about cutting and splicing.

The contribution of an editor's work to a finished film is frequently underestimated and rarely heeded. But it's not a task approached in the splendid isolation of an editing suite after the production is finished; it's an ongoing occupation.

Richard Marden prefers to start editing as soon as there is footage available. 'You're putting sequences together all the time as they're being shot, trying to keep up as far as you can with the process on the studio floor. This is valuable because it allows you to see the film building up and developing. In a film of a fantastical nature you are probably building your own world. It may be that you need to do extra shots or different shots or go in for more special effects than you thought to capture that.'

The editor makes a rough cut of whatever sequences have been shot and talks them over with the director. Although Richard Marden has been editing films for over twenty years, *Hellraiser* was the first horror film he'd worked on. He was also working with a director new to the medium. 'In *Hellraiser* it worked very well because Clive didn't appear to have any real hang-ups about seeing material. I always felt I had to treat directors with kid gloves because I understand they've got problems. Clive was very happy when, after the day's rushes were screened, I would show him whatever sequences I'd done and we'd have a simple discussion. It enabled him to see it was coming on fine and he was getting feedback that he could respond to very quickly.'

The fact that Barker had never worked with film before was not a problem during the production of *Hellraiser*. 'Clive had studied enough movies to know that you need to shoot sufficient film to cover a scene. He had a tremendous imagination anyway and he was the first one to say 'I don't know what we do to get this'. He had very good technical backup. Everybody understood that it was Clive's first picture. It was a very sensible and good way of making movies.'

THE LIGHT FANTASTIQUE

On any film, the editor has to deal with the simple mechanics of making sure the film flows well – that chracters look in the right direction, that sequences run smoothly and that no exposition is lost in the editing. In a fantastique film there is an extra dimension. 'I think that special effects entail more, both in amounts of film and amounts of cuts. There are more cuts because, however cleverly special effects are orchestrated, you can't take the whole movement right the way through. Often special effects are composites of backgrounds and foregrounds and optical effects and so on, so you're not going to get all of this together until a month or so after the initial shoot. You get used to seeing a picture which is full of bits and pieces, which isn't at all what the audience will see. That means you have to view it slightly differently in terms of cutting it. Like anything, you're cutting it to make it work. Whatever sort of movie you're making, you're working to show everything to the best advantage. Overall to tell a tale.'

"*Hellraiser* and *Hellbound* have shock moments which are intended – in a tradition of Grand Guignol ideas"

During the process of looking at the film scene by scene, shot by shot, the editor gets to know it extremely well and can perhaps take it for granted. But danger arises if the editor becomes totally detached from the story: 'You must remember an audience has seen none of this and has to read the images fresh. You have to be careful with trimming something too much. Have you lost the emotion? Or the comedy? A scene can be very funny two or three times, but afterwards you have to take for granted that it's funny as you can't keep laughing at it. You must learn to leave it alone at a certain point.'

THE CRUELLEST CUT

With horror film, 'cutting' is often perceived as what the censor does to the director's masterpiece, depriving gorehounds of their thrills. Of course, the censor doesn't actually do the cutting. The BBFC or MPAA simply provide guidelines and the film editor trims the film to match. The film is then re-submitted to be given a certificate. *Hellbound* was submitted to the MPAA four times, was cut each time and was still refused a certificate. Eventually it was cut to the censor's satisfaction and released in the USA in November. All along, Richard Marden was expecting problems: 'It is a gory film. I don't think it is particularly gratuitous, or that either *Hellraiser* or *Hellbound* are 'let's chop up the teenagers' type movies. It has its shock moments which are intended. It's in a tradition of old Grand Guignol ideas. You can look at that in painting or sculpture – we're putting that on screen and some people find it distasteful. The problem with these things is that if you shorten them you tend to make them more violent.'

Some people, particularly the censorship bodies, would advocate leaving out such 'distasteful' scenes altogether. 'It is a problem – if you don't put them in this type of film you've missed half the plot. You have to assume that people have a certain ability to deal with what they see. Some people will go along to see these movies for all the wrong reasons – but people could see any movie for the wrong reasons. It has been a policy too see how far we can go in these movies, but obviously they are fantasies.'

Having dealt with out-and-out horror for the first time in *Hellraiser* (Marden previously edited *Frankenstein – The True Story*, a very literary adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel) Richard was attracted to *Hellbound* because it was a film on a different scale. Having thought that he wouldn't even have gone to see the first movie if he'd not been involved, Richard Marden found himself quite interested in how the myth was going to develop. 'There is an extension of the ideas, though it's a very different sort of movie. There is a philosophy behind it about good versus evil which keeps it moving along. Hell is not a fiery place with devils with tails and tridents. It's a very imaginative and very well-designed Hell. There is some clever work from the art department and the special effects people, with some matte work which builds up this extraordinary place into which we find ourselves taken. There is a very varied landscape for us to see, with an epic and unconventional feel about it.'

"If you don't put 'distasteful' scenes in this type of film you've missed half the plot. You have to assume that people have a certain ability to deal with what they see."

Hellraiser 3: Hell on Earth is already on the cards and Marden will also be editing *Nightbreed*. Is he keen to remain a part of the Film Futures team? 'I think so. I thoroughly enjoy working with Chris (Figg) and Clive – they're very bright and exciting people to be with. They are doing things in Britain that work, making ideas work with little money. They're imaginative, practical and, importantly, bankable. It has been a new mode for me as the other films I've edited have not been of this nature and the differences are tremendous. You need imagination of a different kind to make a whole new world.'

PHANTAS

Mark Salisbury reports from the set of Clive Barker's new movie *Nightbreed*.

'On *Hellraiser* I didn't really know what I was doing,' confesses Clive Barker on the set of *Nightbreed*, his second foray into directing. 'On this I *think* I know what I'm doing. Having said that, the scale of problems on this is massively larger. We're making a small epic of the fantastique.'

Despite Barker's typically self-effacing opinion of his filmmaking abilities, Morgan Creek, the production company behind David Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers* and the brat-pack western, *Young Guns*, obviously think him capable of the task at hand, having coughed up the necessary dosh – £11 million – to adapt his best-selling novel *Cabal* for the big screen.

Photo: Murray Close

"I'm attempting to make heroes of those type of creatures usually shat upon in films"

Hellraiser, Barker's first film as director, was a diamond in the rough; an impressive, if slightly flawed, first appearance in the cinematic arena that established him as a talent to be reckoned with and not just another author with delusions of celluloid grandeur. It introduced Pinhead and the Cenobites, a gang of masochistic mercenaries from Hell with a penchant for ripping flesh, and stood out amongst the myriad of mindless horror vehicles by virtue of its intelligent approach to its material.

With *Nightbreed*, Barker has shied away from the hardcore horror of his debut: 'The emphasis in this tends to be on the fantastical rather than the gory,' he states. The analogy banded about on set is that *Nightbreed* will be the *Star Wars* of horror films. Barker himself refers to it as a cross between *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones* and *Hill Street Blues*. In terms of plot, scale, budget and flayed flesh, it's a million miles removed from *Hellraiser*. But fear not **FEAR** fans, there's plenty to please. There's blood, albeit in small to medium doses, and monsters coming out of the woodwork. We're talking action-adventure-monster-romance-thriller movie here. There's even mention of a 15 certificate.

Both book and film tell the tale of the eponymous *Nightbreed*, a lost tribe of shape-shifters residing in the mythical Midian, a secret sanctuary hidden beneath a necropolis in the prairielands of Alberta, Canada. To it comes Boone who, convinced by his psychiatrist, Decker (played by film director David Cronenberg), that he's a mass murderer, sees it as a place of refuge. Its existence discovered, it's not long before humanity, in the shape of the xenophobic Eigerman (*Hill Street Blues*' Charlie Haid), a faithless priest, Ashbery, and Decker set out to destroy it. The twist in Barker's tale is that the monstrous inhabitants of Midian are, for once, the good guys. It's us humans who are the scuzballs.

BACK TO BOSCH

'The whole idea of pitting one set of monsters against another is particularly interesting to me,' explains Barker. 'Here I'm attempting to make heroes of those type of creatures usually shat upon in films.

'I always wanted this movie to be like a Bosch painting. I wanted there to be some kind of eruption of invention with the creatures, so many types and so many variations, a wealth of weirdness. The idea was to create a society of creatures, a real sense of a colony and that's the way it's turned out. Too often in horror movies or fantasy movies there's never enough.'

There's no doubt that *Nightbreed* will have enough. Barker and last issue's cover stars,

MAGORIA

Photo: Murray Close

Image Animation, the special effects company that put the pins in Pinhead, spent months concocting creatuers to populate Midian. The first experiments amounted to little more than actors covered with body paint until prosthetics won the day. A conservative guess from effects supervisors Bob Keen and Geoff Portass puts *Nightbreed*'s creature count at around the 250 mark but, whatever the exact amount, the film is in serious danger of turning into the biggest monster movie ever made.

> "Midian is bigger than in the book, it's more elaborate, more detailed in its imaginings and in the way it's been realised"

Barker and I are on C stage at Pinewood Studios, where the labyrinthine domain of the Breed, a network of dug-out cubby holes and criss-crossing rope bridges, has been constructed. Today is the last day of shooting on the Midian set before it's torn down and the director is having fun. *Light at the End* authors John Skipp and Craig Spector and *Hellbound* screenwriter Pete Atkins have been enlisted to play a trio of transvestite monsters. The splatterpunk pair are in England on a fortnight's visit to witness Barker at work. On their first day at Pinewood they were roped into appearing as a couple of Decker's blood-spattered victims. Atkins, in preparation for *Hellraiser 3: Hell on Earth*, is *Nightbreed*'s second unit director. As the three stooges prepare for their spot in front of the camera, Barker explains the differences between his vision of Midian on paper and on film. 'Midian is bigger than in the book. It's more elaborate, more detailed in its imaginings and in the way it's been realised. The whole challenge is taking material which, on the page, was rendered impressionistically and have it realised in great detail when you actually build it.'

While Spector prowls the set armed with video camera, in a corner of the vast soundstage the film's most intriguing and eclectic piece of casting is pretending to be dead. Perched high on a ledge, a besuited David Cronenberg is enacting the final fleeting moments of Decker's miserable existence, his usually bespectacled face naked and covered with blood. As 'action' is called, the Canadian falls back, left arm outstretched. The relish on Barker's face is evident. Cronenberg then dies again. And again.

'I'm here because Clive called me and asked me,' explains Cronenberg later. 'I mean, if Clive called you, you'd come too.'

Principal photography on *Nightbreed* was completed at the end of May. The earliest glimpse British audiences are likely to get of it will be in March 1990.

FEAR competition

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Clive Barker's Hellbound: Hellraiser II

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HARLIN DROPS ALIEN 3!

Does Damien return in Omen 4? Will Roddy McDowell ape around in his next movie? What next for The Blob's Kevin Dillon? And is Stan Winston's underwater movie The Abyss just another drop in the ocean? John Glenday has the answers.

Roger Corman is planning to direct his long-time pet project, *Frankenstein Unbound*, based on the Brian Aldiss story. You can guess how much it means to Roger, as rumours say the budget will be approximately $10 million more than he usually spends. Not one to miss a trend, Roger is also on the underwater movie bandwagon with not one but two flicks, *Full Fathom Five* and *Lords of the Deep*.

In the US the only underwater movie which has yet to appear is *The Abyss* – all the others have sunk without trace. In the UK we'll see Sean Cunningham's *Deep Star Six* next month.

Tobe Hooper is directing *Spontaneous Combustion* with Brad *Child's Play* Dourif and famed director Andre deToth (*House of Wax*) leaving *Texas Chainsaw 3* to New Zealander David Blyth. There are three *Chainsaw* sequels planned in close succession.

On the sequel front this month there is talk of an *Omen 4*, *Hills Have Eyes 3* and *The Fly III*, planned to start shooting towards the end of the year.

Roddy McDowell has agreed to appear in a sixth *Planet of the Apes* movie called *The Fourth War*. His one stipulation is that he is killed off!

Terminator 2 is still on the LA turntable. It tells the story of a young John Conner fighting a new machine which has been sent back to get him. The young man is assisted by a time-travelling super-warrior.

As for *Batman* sequels, rumours are abundant. Joe Dante was rumoured to have penned number three but, according to him, that's untrue. His next project is *Gremlins 2* (exclusive interview next issue) which will shoot in New York. Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates and Dick Miller reprise their roles and they are joined by Robert Picardo and Christopher Lee.

GARBAGE COLLECTION

Renny Harlin has brought HR Giger onto *Alien 3* but has left the movie to direct *Ford Fairline*, a non-genre flick for Twentieth Century Fox.

Highlander 2020 (not *The Quickening* or *Yellowknife* as previous reports suggested) is the sequel planned to Chris Lambert's Highland fling. The Brian Clemen's script will be directed by Russell Mulcahy. No word on the return of Clancy Brown as the Kurgen but he will soon appear in Katheryn Bigelow's *Blue Steel*. The movie's about a rookie female cop, Jamie Lee Curtis, who falls in love with a man who later turns out to be a psycho.

Living legend Sam Raimi is directing *The Dark Man* for Universal. It's a walking dead film with political overtones – probably my film of the year.

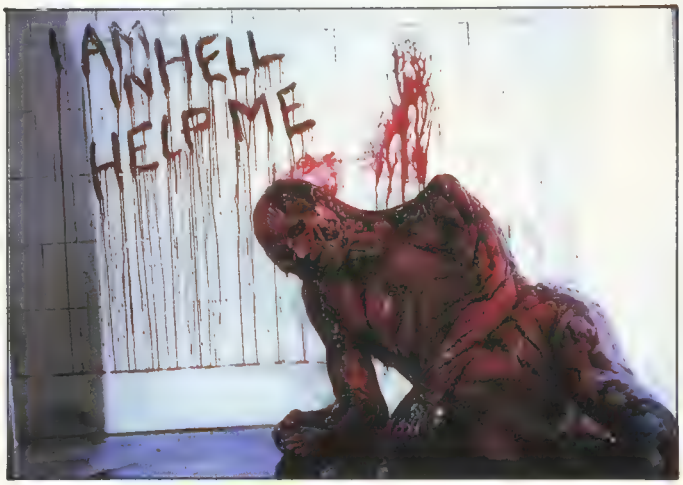
Watch out for a little-known movie called *Temors*. It stars Remo-man Fred Ward and Blob-killer Kevin Dillon as a couple of garbage men who are called upon to save the world from little creatures.

News of *Star Trek 5* is not sounding good. Director William Shatner's cut of the film was not well received by studio execs who have recut the film. I think it could be one of the weakest in the series.

WATCHING BRIEF

Stanley Kubrick is after the movie version of *The Stainless Steel Rat* . . . stupid titles from Troma films: *Rabid Grannies* and *Stuff Stephanie in the Incinerator* . . . and *Stepfather 2* has Terry O'Quinn escape from an asylum whilst pretending to be a doctor . . .

HELLBOUND: HELLRAISER II



Starring: **Ashley Lawrence, Clare Higgins, Kenneth Cranham, Imogen Boorman**
Director **Tony Randel**
Distributor **Premier Releasing**
Cert 18

Seven months late, *Hellbound* arrives minus more, much more, than the two minutes of gratuitous gore chopped by the MPAA.

Beginning where its predecessor left off, first-time helmer Randel's sequel to Barker's dazzling, if flawed, directoral debut, is light on innovation and heavy on inanity.

Battered, bloodied and bruised, *Hellraiser* heroine Kirsty (Ashley Lawrence) wakes up in the Channard Institute slightly the worse for wear from her ordeal in Part One, muttering of flesh-ripping Cenobites, strange puzzle-boxes and skinless parents.

Ostensibly concerned for his patient's welfare, the Institute's Dr Channard (played with much manic glee by television's Harvey Moon, Kenneth Cranham), conceals an unhealthy interest in the secrets of the Lament Configuration puzzle-box and a Faustian fascination for Hell's darkest secrets beneath his benign exterior.

Resurrecting Kirsty's stepmum, Julia (Clare Higgins), from the blood-stained mattress on which she died, Channard provides her with a skin to inhabit and insane souls to sup upon in return for a promised visit down under. Meanwhile, in a room neighbouring Kirsty's, mute teen Tiffany (Imogen Boorman), a genius with puzzles, fiddles with a Lament Configuration and it's only a matter of time before it starts transforming in her nimble little hands, opening up the doorway to Hell . . .

Despite some stunning imagery – Pinhead's conception, the re-appearance of the Cenobites, skinless Julia wrapped in bandages and dress – *Hellbound* is marred to the point of irretrievable ineptitude by sloppy, haphazard direction and an incoherent narrative too derivative of the original for its own good: a succession of set-pieces substituted for a storyline does not a movie make. To be fair, Atkins' script *does*, on occasion, offer up a number of interesting plot possibilities, but none are explained or explored. The grim simplicity and claustrophobic confines of Barker's Grand Guignol exercise make way for an inane gorefeast populated by puppets.

That said, the requisite gruesome special effects (even in its cut form) and high blood quotient should satisfy the most ardent of goreguzzlers; while Pinhead, masochistic mercenary supreme, re-affirms his status as horror cinema's most terrifying creation. It's a film of moments, but a number too few to swing favour. A major, major disappointment.
Mark Salisbury

The cuts proposed by the MPAA were foreseeable in the uncut version of the movie. They include: Pinhead's creation – seconds cut where his scalp is sliced and nails are driven through his skull; Julia's resurrection – the Browning razor slash sequence and a few seconds of his struggle on the mattress with Julia; Channard becomes a Cenobite – a few seconds shaved from face slicing and fluid injection sequences; several labyrinth/corridor chase sequences; Pinhead reverts to human – excellent sequence in which actor Doug Bradley moves his throat to show that it has been cut.

Most of the cuts do, however, make it a stronger movie.
John Gilbert

INDIANA JONES II: THE FINAL CRUSADE

Starring: **Harrison Ford, Sean Connery, River Phoenix, Julian Glover, Denholm Elliott, Alison Doody**
Director **Steven Spielberg**
Distributor **UIP**
Cert PG

The second installment of the Jones saga was a disappointment and I was expecting more of the same in the third.

True, Indy is a film critic's nightmare. He represents everything that is distasteful about modern kitsch movie-making when the director's eye, as well as that of the producer, is on profits rather than principle. *The Final Crusade*, however, makes you neglect all that, hang up your pen and forget your shorthand scribble. From the moment that young Indy (River Phoenix) discovers a theft of rare antiquities while on a trip with the boy scouts to find the Holy Grail, the emphasis is on non-stop, well ordered, action and, at times, corny invention.

After an education in Indy lore – why he has a passion for archaeology, why he sports a whip and hat, and why he hates snakes – we are brought into the war years to be told by shifty philanthropist Julian Glover that Indy's father has gone missing during a search for the Holy Grail. Never one to miss an opportunity to become part of history, Jones Junior collects the scholarly Denholm Elliott, who reprises his role in the first film, and travels around the world to gather clues to the Grail, picking up Alison Doody, as another hapless heroine, on the way.

Indy, again in the guise of Harrison Ford, is eventually reunited with his father – Sean Connery – who has been captured by a horde of Nazis. A series of wonderful visual jokes, one of which uses an astonishing Hitler lookalike, leads Jones to the Grail and a showdown with Julian Glover who, to my mind, has always made a wonderful villain since his days on *Saturn 3*.

The finale is gory – it had one young member of the Sunday preview audience in tears – but very satisfying. Leave your brain at the door and enjoy director Spielberg's consummate skill at working an audience and creating wonderful entertainment.
John Gilbert

WAXWORK

Starring: **David Warner, Zach Galligan, Deborah Foreman, Patrick Macnee**
Director **Anthony Hickox**
Distributor **Vestron**
Cert 18

Wax museums hold a special place in the hearts of horror fans. Their exhibits chart a course of evil and misery through human history, legend entwines with reality and everything is so lifelike.

Anthony Hickox's directoral debut poses the question, what if all this evil could be released with the relevant sacrifices? The sacrifices come in the form of a group of inquisitive teenagers, lead by Mark (Zach Galligan) and his on/off girlfriend (Deborah Foreman). They investigate a wax museum which has suddenly popped out of thin air in their town.

The museum's owner, Mr Lincoln (David Warner), is all too keen to have their patronage but soon several members of the teen crew have magically entered some of the exhibits. One is bitten by a werewolf, another falls prey to a vampire and yet another is whipped by the Marquis de Sade.

Once all the exhibits have claimed a victim, their evils will be loosed upon the world.

Fortunately, Mark and an old family friend (Patrick Macnee) discover the plot and, in one of the most bizarre finales I've ever seen, best the re-animated monsters.

Waxwork is pure horror fun. Lavish photography and excellent special effects from Bob Keen of Image Animation lend weight to a professional production which, I am told, was filmed on a shoe-string and a prayer.
John Gilbert

WATCHERS

Starring: **Corey Haim, Michael Ironside, Layla**
Director **Jon Hess**
Distributor **Guild**
Cert 18

Dean Koontz must be well and truly embarrassed. His wonderful novel *Watchers* has been disembowelled by unthinking screenwriters (Damien Lee, David Mitchell) and turned into a turgid, illogical and oversentimental SF/horror flick.

Director Jon Hess no doubt cast Corey Haim in the lead role because of the boy's unenviable cuteness. He does have a certain sex appeal but he also has a long way to go as an actor. His relationship with Furface, the lovable intellectual canine who has escaped from an experimental research station, would hold up well as the core of the story but dog and boy do not make an easy couple in this film. Hess and co appear to have realised the flaw fairly early in production and rely rather heavily on the destruction wreaked by Oxcom 10, a clever but deadly monkey creature who constantly seeks Furface and destroys all those who are contaminated with the dog's spoor.

It's a brilliant story idea but, in the film, lacks logic in its

execution. Oxcom tracks the dog down to Haim's high school and kills a teacher with whom the canine has come into contact. It then waits around for no apparent reason and kills a security guard and cops just for the sheer hell of it – whatever happened to the homing instinct?

Michael Ironside and the interestingly named Layla make up the rest of the tawdry cast, playing a homicidal secret policeman and Haim's girlfriend respectively. Each has discovered new ways in which to torture and destroy any hint of characterisation in the people they play. If you are a Koontz fan I suggest you wait for New World's rendition of *Phantoms* - if it is ever made. Koontz appears to have the Stephen King movie curse but, from what I've seen, he's got it much worse.

John Gilbert

DEEP STAR SIX

Starring: **Taurean Blacque, Greg Evigan, Miguel Ferrer, Marius Weyers**
Director **Sean Cunningham**
Distributor **Guild**
Cert 15

Possibly the worst of the underwater movies – although we still have *The Abyss* to come – *Deep Star Six* concerns an ill-fated expedition to lay a missile silo at the bottom of the sea.

Directed by Sean Cunningham, who really should know better, it stars Taurean Blacque and Greg Evigan as two bubble-headed lovers, Miguel Ferrer, who gives a very unimpressive cabaret performance as a neurotic aqua commander, Marius Weyers who by turns shudders from maniacal atomic physicist Van Gelder to heroic blimp.

The inane storyline starts when Van Gelder blows up the seabed and looses a monster on the hapless crew of a mini-sub crew. We don't get to see the creature until the final scenes but, far from building up atmosphere, the monumental cop-out throws tension out of the window – so to speak – and leaves the audience in fits of giggles. As you will see later, the monster is nothing to laugh about . . . though the underwater effects are.

Cunningham proudly points out the problems of working underwater and has eagerly talked about the clever solution. But none of this ingenuity shows on the screen. It's Troy Tempest time folks, but someone should have warned Cunningham that bubbles escaping from an undersea deep pressure environment can only spell trouble. One critic at the preview screening turned to me and said, 'Someone ought to tell them that there's a leak in the airlock!'.

And so to the monster which, admittedly, gained our interest and gave us a few shocks. It is easily the best thing about this unsuccessful attempt at underwater horror but is likely to be overshadowed by Cameron's massive leviathan – you can't get it all on screen – which will soon appear in the Twentieth Century Fox picture *The Abyss*.

John Gilbert

THEY LIVE

(Guild, Cert. 18)

John Carpenter and Roddy Piper talk to Marc Shapiro.

They Live, which stars former pro wrestler Roddy Piper, Keith David, Meg Foster, Peter Jason, Buck Flower and Raymond St Jacques, centres around an out of work blue collar worker, John Nada, who, while living in a Los Angeles homeless centre, stumbles upon a decades old plot by aliens to take over the earth and its resources through mind control hidden in subliminal television and print ad messages. Nada (Piper) subsequently wages a one man war against the aliens and their earth sympathisers in an attempt to save humanity.

Director John Carpenter cast his line in the direction of *They Live* not long after the release of *Prince of Darkness*. 'I was looking for something eclectic and a bit out of the ordinary to do, and I came upon a short story by Ray Nelson called *Eight O'Clock in the Morning*.'

The story, first published in 1963, tells the tale of a man who is hypnotised and awakes to discover that there are creatures hiding among the human race, controlling their actions.

'For the longest time I wasn't quite sure how to tell this story,' confesses Carpenter. 'My initial feeling was to make it flat out scary but there always seemed to be humour creeping back into it. I was at a loss on how to bring that fear and humour together until I met wrestler Roddy Piper.'

Piper, a brutish, heartland of America type, whose acting experience has been limited to the direct to video nasties *Hell Comes to Frog Town* and *Body Slam*, claims that his approach to acting is 'not to act. And I think that's the main reason why *They Live* seems to work.'

Piper laughs off his previous acting efforts as his 'Rin Tin Tin period' before conceding that *They Live* has forced him to stretch his limited acting talents. 'It's been more of a personal challenge than anything else. I've had to learn to control my aggressiveness and not take the physical action too far. But the hardest part has been letting my emotions go and not bundling them up like I've done all my life.'

They Live is not without its FX moments. Nada possesses a pair of cheap sunglasses that allow him to see through the alien's earthly disguises to the mind altering billboards that have become part of our daily lives. Carpenter filmed in the seedier confines of downtown Los Angeles which, to this day, are largely populated by the homeless. Thus the grit reflected in *They Live* rings uncomfortably true.

'But this is really a subtle picture,' defends Carpenter. 'Sure, we've got lots of effects but they're not the real over the top kinds of thing. But the important thing, as far as I'm concerned, has been the

challenge of making a movie that tells a complicated story and that addresses a number of issues.'

Carpenter puts aside *They Live* for a moment to address a recent success and to dispel one nagging rumour: '*Prince of Darkness* won a couple of awards in Europe and it's done good box office here and in the States. It also allowed me to put some twists and turns in the horror genre so I have no complaints.'

Next on Carpenter's agenda? His alleged blessing on the film *Halloween 4: The Return of Michael Myers*.

'Donald Pleasence called me a couple of months ago and asked me how I liked the script of *Halloween 4*? I told him I hadn't read it. Pleasence said 'well the producers are telling anybody who will listen that you've seen the script and that you said it was the best *Halloween* script ever'. I want to set the record straight right now. I haven't read the script and I don't know what the story is about.'

Carpenter concludes by returning to *They Live* and speculates on what the audience will get from the movie: 'I don't know if people will look at the homeless differently after seeing *They Live*, because it is not a serious movie. People won't come out of the theatre and say I've got to do something about that. But I guarantee you that it will make middle-class audiences stop and think because, if there's an overriding message to this movie, it's that all people are interested in is the bucks and doing anything they have to to make them.'

COCOON II: THE RETURN

Starring: **Don Ameche, Wilford Brimley, Jack Gilford**
Director **Daniel Petrie**
Distributor **Twentieth Century Fox**
Cert PG

The twee oldsters are back to dish out a second dose of formula entertainment.

We have the same cast (Don Ameche, Wilford Brimley, Jack Gilford and so on) coming back to get another cocoon and see the folks back home on Earth, even though the intergalactic pensioners deteriorate when they are here.

When I first saw the American poster for the movie saying 'Travel to the most wonderful place in the universe . . . home', I just knew this movie was going to suck.

'This looks like a TV movie,' said someone in the audience, and that one statement captures the essence of *Cocoon II*. I have to admit, I did smile when Don Ameche's wife became pregnant but it may have been my own bad taste, rather than sentimentality, getting the better of me.

At the end of the film, you are shown clips from the first movie, a painful reminder of the fact that the original was so much better. Anyway, if you have read this review and go to see *Cocoon II*, you can't say you weren't warned.

In some cases I would say wait and see this film on video, but this time I have to advise you to wait for the movie to appear on its medium, commerical television, interspersed with adverts every twenty minutes.
John Glenday

WARLOCK

Starring: **Julian Sands, Richard E Grant, Lori Singer**
Director **Steve Miner**
Distributor **Medusa**
Cert 15

Julian Sands forsakes his common link to romantic leads and takes on the role of an evil seventeenth century warlock who escapes captivity and execution in the Massachusetts of 1691 to collect the pages of the Devil's Grande Grimoire in Los Angeles 1988.

Closely followed by witchfinder Giles Redferne, played with rough rudeness by Richard E Grant, he crashes into the home of waitress Kassandra (Lori Singer), whom he curses to age ten years every day.

Grant goes after the Grimoire while Singer goes after her youth. They make a wonderful comic, and sometimes tragic, duo which I hope will be quickly reprised on a bigger budget. Yes, budgetary limits mean that the movies FX are wobbly on occasions, but the originality shown by the scriptwriter (David Twohy) and director (Steve Miner) begs for a sequel. Horror fans, put aside your pride. *Warlock* may not have an 18 certificate, it may not be the goriest show in town, but it has brains – and not just the kind that Jason Voorhees has for supper.
John Gilbert

CUTTING CLASS

Starring: **Donovan Leitch, Roddy McDowell**
Director **Rospo Pallenberg**
Distributor **Vestron**
Cert 18, 88 mins

This is a standard 'psycho with a grudge killing teens in their high school' movie. OOPS! Sorry – I've just given the entire plot away. Of course there are a couple of incidental details but the only thing of any note in this film is **Roddy McDowell**'s miniscule part as principal of the faculty where the killer is at work. McDowell takes pleasure in getting female students to pick things up off his office floor whilst they are attired in gymslips.

What we have on the grue side is death by arrow, knife, incinerator, as well as a good reason not to go on a trampoline when someone is holding a spear underneath. Most of the deaths are trimmed in some way but, as it is all familiar ground, it doesn't really matter.

There is a reasonably interesting powertool fight in the school workshops at the climax of the movie, but don't count on any chainsaws.

Director **Rospo Pallenberg** (of *Exorcist 2* and *Excalibur* fame) gets back down in the mire with this movie, although I was surprised to see his name attached. At least Mr Pallenberg is still in employment.
John Glenday

GHOSTHOUSE II

Starring: **Linda Blair, David Hasselhoff**
Distributor **Colourbox**
Cert 18, 84 mins

An example of the kind of movie that **Linda Blair** is making these days. Ms Blair mentioned this film last but called it *Witchcraft*. It is now titled *Ghosthouse II*, and bears no relation to the original – a bit like *House* and *House 2*, really. It's an Italian-made movie and it gets shakey in places, but the grot is balanced by some over-the-top set pieces.

A family move into a haunted house only later to discover that it is also home to three gates of hell. Once various victims have passed through the groovy swirling time tunnels they are subjected to a host of painful tortures. My favourite is the woman who gets her lips sewn together whilst surrounded by three cackling hags, who look as if they are straight out of Macbeth – but can't act.

The cast gets roasted, crucified etc, and in the end valiant Blair pulls a possession routine in which a ton of hair lacquer is used to good effect.

Ghosthouse II could be a tad shorter and the Knight Rider himself is a complete waste of space. His performance is like watching a vacuum.
John Glenday

THE ATTIC

Starring: **Carol Lynley**
Director **Doug Adams**
Cert 18

Joseph Stefano. The name may not mean much to the new generation of horror fans, but this man wrote the screenplay for the original *Psycho* and as such provokes fond memories, even for the likes of me.

So, you might ask, what's he doing re-scripting a low budget thriller for the Castle Home Video label? And my answer to such impertinence would be, who said that low budget has to equal lousy quality.

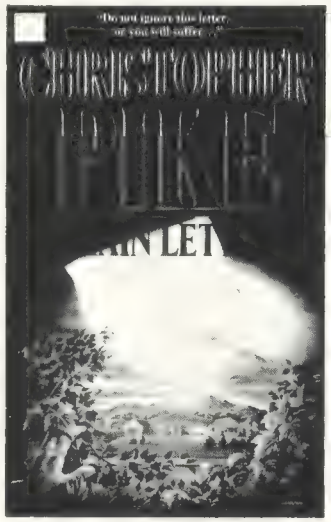
The Attic is a forceful, if somewhat melodramatic, psycho-sexual thriller, stylishly made by director Doug Adams. He has made a fortunate choice of cast with Carol Lynley as Ester, a young woman who returns to her home to find her long lost father. Instead she finds her mother and uncle Alan, who looks harmless, if a bit nutty.

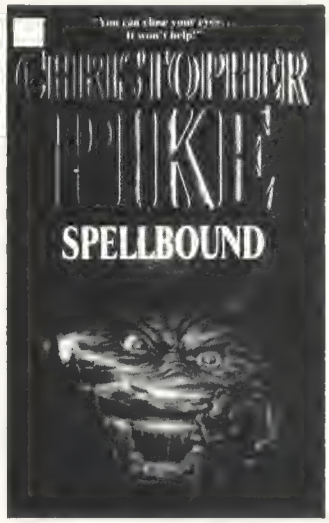
There is no love lost between the two women and Ester soon suspects that her mother killed her father who was caught in an act of incest. Ester has a few jolts of memory about the rape, cunningly passed on to the viewer through some speedy flashbacks, but cannot figure out who did what in her memories. She had better find out fast, though, as people are starting to die in town. Her mother's attic soon becomes the focus of the obsessions Ester has about her father and she has to face the memories that lie dormant up there.

The Attic is nowhere near as suspenseful as *Psycho* but the characterisation and pace are, nonetheless, strong. It's unlikely to be a Hitchcockian masterpiece but that's certainly no reason not to rent it?
Michael Glenn

CHAIN LETTER/SPELLBOUND

Christopher Pike
Publisher **Lightning**
Format **Paperback, £2.50**
Category **Thriller**





Teen fiction is about to become big business in Britain and American best-seller Christopher Pike is spearheading the movement across the Atlantic.

His first two novels are short contemporary thrillers which include a twist of the macabre. *Chain Letter* sends a series of letters signed 'The Caretaker' to Alison and her friends. The bunch believe that the author knows about the terrible crime they apparently committed in the Californian desert and is out to exact retribution.

Similarly, *Spellbound* focuses on murder, this time of youngster Karen Holly whose mutilated body is found in a mountain stream. Boyfriend Jason is soon implicated and appears even more suspicious when he takes a new lady into his life. All is never what it seems, however, and the old phrase 'return to the scene of the crime' takes on a brutal new meaning.

Both books are solidly written for the young market, so you won't find any gore in these pages. Pike is, however, a master of suggestion and uses it to discuss subjects which are normally taboo in a difficult market. Death and the supernatural are common themes and this author has found a contemporary setting and style in which to remake the teens of thriller fiction as emotional beings rather than hatchet fodder. Long may he reign.

John Gilbert

SOURCERY

Terry Pratchett
Publisher **Corgi**
Format **Paperback, £2.99**
Category **Fantasy/humour**

I don't think I can withstand much more of this. To think a grown man, hard baked in the art of giving the finger to writers and directors, could sit down and laugh his head off at the adventures of a loony wizard and his walking luggage.

I'm sorry, but Terry Pratchett has that effect on me and his latest Discworld novel is a corker. It's really a follow-up to *Equal Rites* and begins with with an eighth son of an eighth son – a wizard by any other name. He has seven sons but then conceives an eighth which is, you've guessed it, a wizard squared, sometimes called a Sourcerer. As ever, this mad, semi-mythical being was born into Discworld for a reason – there's no such thing as free will there – and, like Rincewind and Mort before him, he has to save the world from dire catastrophe.

All the old gang are, of course,

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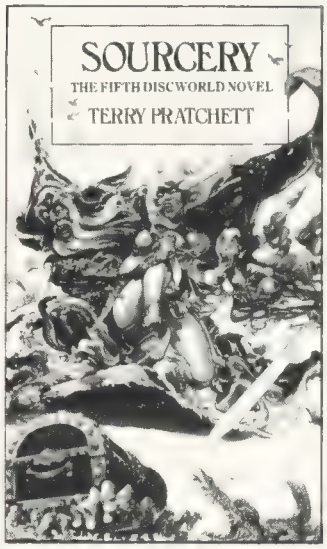


included in the novel. Even death pops his head onto the page and Cohen the Barbarian's daughter, Conina, puts in an appearance. Addicts of Pratchett's earlier novels will also be pleased to hear that Sourcery marks the return of the redoubtable rogue Rincewind and his finger-munching box. It's a reunion long overdue and one which marks this novel with fond memories for me.

What more can I say? Pratchett is so prolific and it's difficult to find new words of praise every time one of his novels hits the shelves. Suffice to say, it's a bloody good read and, if you like fantastic humour, go out and buy it!

Mark Westerby

THE LODESTONE

Allen Harbinson
Publisher **Sphere**
Format **Paperback, £3.99**
Category **Fantasy**

Jackie Collins meets the Count de Saint Germain. No, I'm serious, Harbinson's first novel reads like a Collins escapade, a mixture of strange sex and supernatural sophistry.

The incredibly cruel master criminal and neo-Nazi Wilhelm Zweig wants the Lodestone, the legendary tip of the Great Pyramid which hosts the power of the immortals. He will use anyone, including his masochistic mistress and pawn bodyguard, to get at the secret which will stop the all-too-fast ageing of his degenerate body.

Ranged against him are the aged Count de Saint Germain, a young and idle American, and Zweig's long-suffering daughter. The latter two take their search for the stone from America to England and the Orient on a trail which leads them past the seven wonders of the world and eventually to the Himalayas where the final conflict, the fight for adepthood, takes place in grand Dennis Wheatley style.

I would have been enthralled by the grand fantasy of it if Harbinson had not detoured the narrative through some rocky philosophical terrain. He may want to keep the reader's belief in the subject matter, but there are less hamfisted ways of doing so. I soon became bored with page upon page of metaphysical history and description – perhaps the author was trying to prove something to himself.

Fortunately, *The Lodestone* is an easy – if overlong – read, but I got the feeling that, after all the sweat, I got less out of the book than I put into it and, on occasion, forgot the names and functions of some of the patently cardboard characters.

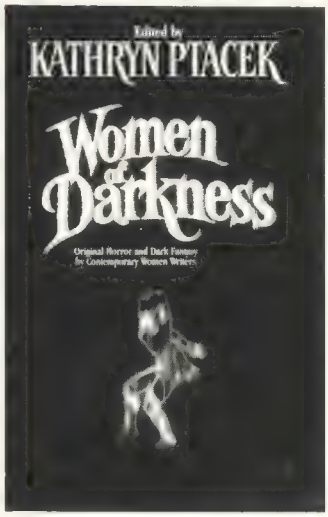
John Gilbert

WOMEN OF DARKNESS

Edited by Kathryn Ptacek
Publisher **Tor Books**
Category **Horror**

Although this anthology is composed entirely of contemporary women writers, don't consider *Women of Darkness* a feminist horror book; for there's no politicising here, just good old-fashioned chills and some very fine prose.

Gender may be the unifying theme, but what is interesting is an obvious difference in viewpoint between male and female writers working within the genre. Most of the twenty tales in this volume deal in some way with marriages or emotionally-charged relationships that are either in decay or on the brink of dissolution, usually as a result of male actions or attitudes. Men are presented as predators (in **Nancy Varian Berberick's** *Ransom Cowl Walks the Road* or **Nancy Holder's** *Cannibal Cats Come Out Tonight*, which also gives the Splat Pack a run for their money), psychopaths (**Joan Vander Putten's** *In the Shadows of My Fear*, **Wendy Webb's** *Midnight Madness*), or perpetrators of sexual crimes (the incestuous father of **Melissa Mia Hall's** *The Unloved*, the child molester of **Wennicke Cox's** *Sister*), but women are not necessarily the victims. Which is, of course, how it should be.



Most of the writers are little known, with only **Tanith Lee** and **Lisa Tuttle** scoring on the name recognition scale. Regardless of this, there are many satisfying stories to savour late at night and the following deserve mention for their ability to transcend the page: **Elizabeth Massie** for the warped sensibilities displayed in *Hooked on Buzzer*, **Melanie Tem's** *Aspen Graffiti*, **Karen Haber's** *Samba Sentado* and, in particular, **Carol Orlock's** *Nobody Lives There, Nothing Happens*, a subtle ghost tale brought to life by beautifully evocative prose. Over all, the prose in this book is crisp and sparkling, but Orlock proves to have a talent for language that places the rest in the shade.

A solid, worthwhile anthology and, therefore, recommended.

Philip Nutman

PSYCHLONE

A great name in science fiction and, as you would expect, a similarly great story. **Greg Bear's** *Psychlone* (Gollancz, paperback, £3.50) reads less like science fiction and more like a horror novel.

We are again in a small, isolated town in which all hell is about to be let loose. Sounds like the Stephen King story *The Mist* and, in some respects, it is. Yet another man-made evil is loosed upon the Earth, wreaking human and ecological destruction.

The plot is simplistic although the characters are, as ever, well drawn and sympathetic. The story works, but I was disappointed, no doubt because of the things I have come to expect from Mr Bear's work. The book has not shaken my appreciation of his talent but I get the feeling that this could have been written early in his career and released later because a big name will sell anything.

Mark Westerby

LORI

There are some writers who, despite their brand name influence, are less well known than their books. One such is **Robert Bloch** whose most successful work is *Psycho* and who regularly turns out exceptional thriller fiction.

His latest work is *Lori* (Tor,

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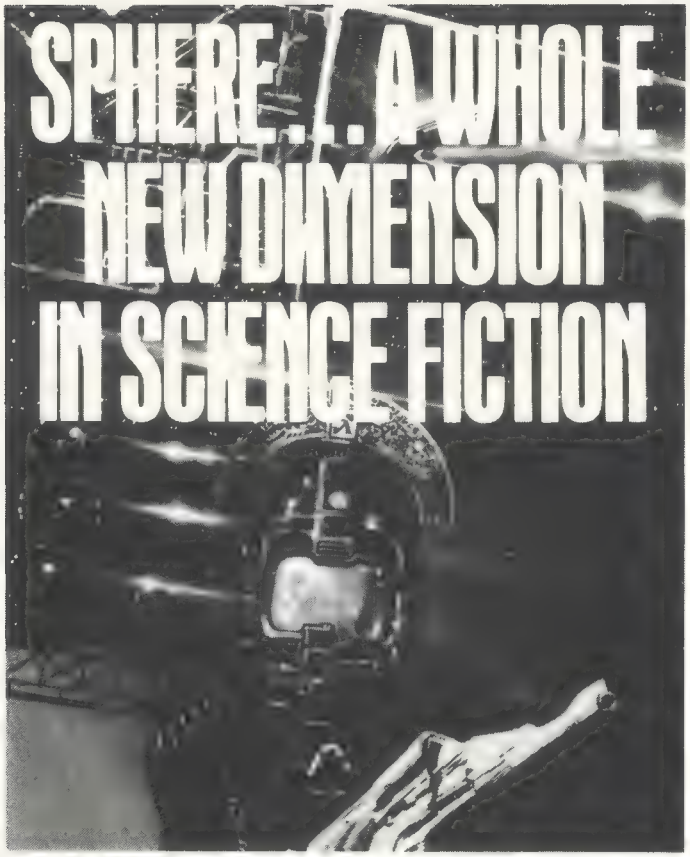

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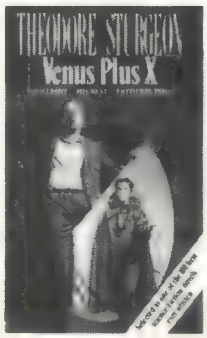

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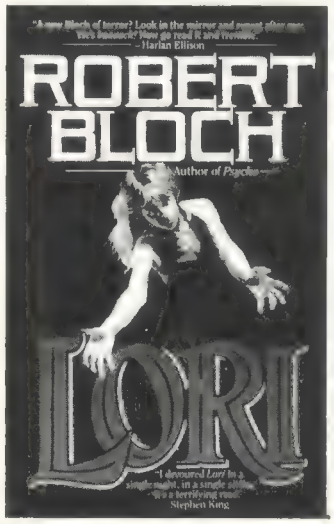
Out Now in Sphere Paperback

hardback, £16.95), a tale of apparent reincarnation in which young, orphaned Lori Holmes discovers her likeness in the college yearbook which was printed before her birth. Her journey towards understanding is marked by a mixture of murder, betrayal and the supernatural.

Bloch's book bares an unsettling atmosphere, but is a little too comfortable for my taste. Many of the plot ideas, from the fire which incinerates her parents to the threatening psychiatrist figure and eerie dreams, all recall other novels, although the mix and match is done with verve.

Like *Earthbound*, the new Richard Matheson novel also reviewed in this issue, *Lori* has the feel of Sixties fiction where writers were trying to outdo each other with plot rather than gore. If you can put up with the slightly aged plot, Robert Bloch's style still has a lot to commend it.

John Gilbert



SAMRAJ

Elaine Aron
Publisher **New English Library**
Format **Trade paperback, £7.95, hardback, £12.95**
Category **Fantasy**

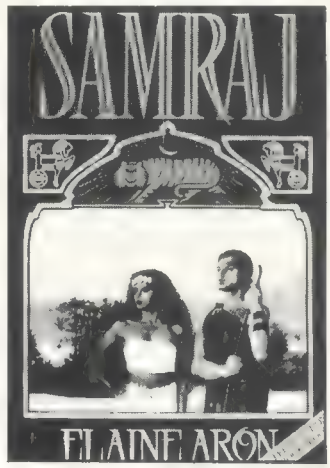
Only on rare occasions do fantasy and literature deign to meet and, I would argue, *Samraj* marks such an occasion.

It marks the start of an epic Indian-inspired trilogy that tells the tale of a human couple chosen to be gods and to save their land from destruction. The man, Yudishtira, is bred to be a warrior and to bring about change through might, while the woman, Draupadi, will bring about change through law-making.

The book is a punishing read. Every closely blocked sentence is essential for understanding and the moment your attention flags you'll need to go back perhaps paragraphs or pages to pick up the action again. It is certainly not the type of novel for a dozy afternoon.

Fabulous and facinating, *Samraj* demanded several weeks of my time and, despite its set-up as a complete unit, I will be glad when the next one hits my door mat. Warnings again to those who prefer the Eddings type of easy read: you won't get it with *Samraj*, but those who experiment and head into the book will find every reading minute worthwhile.

John Gilbert

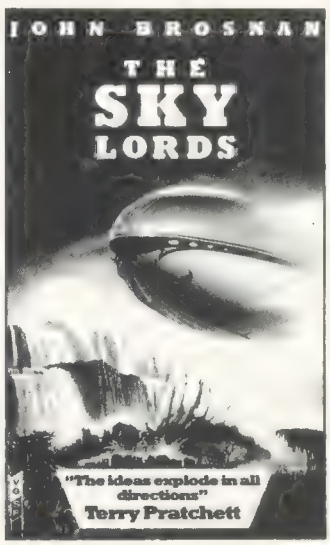


THE SKY LORDS

Ah, a novel with **John Brosnan's** own name on at last! He no doubt thought this SF novel (Gollancz, paperback, £3.50) more worthy of his own name than some of the less than salubrious horror he's put out pseudonymously.

Brosnan was right to take the gamble because *Sky Lords* is a lively, original tale which takes symbols of threat from the past and transports them to a terrifying future. The symbols in question are long airships, Sky Lords, that hover over a landscape inhabited by isolated communities who are recovering from the Gene Wars.

Each of these communities must pay its tributes to the masters of the air but one such grouping has had enough and rebels. The rebellion is soon put down and an example made of a Minervan warrior. She is captured and forced to feed the sexual appetites of the male slaves



PIERS ANTHONY

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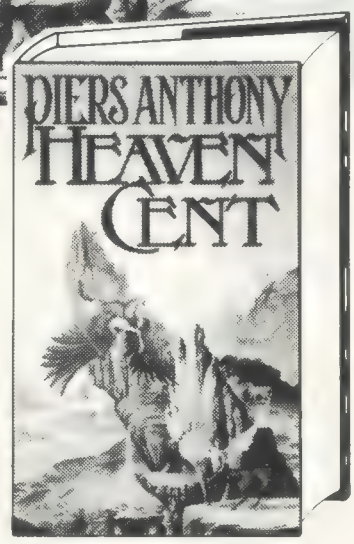

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aboard the airships. But, as is the way of things, she is not held captive for long.

Sky Lords has a hint of H G Wells in its subject matter and style. Its sophisticated story is simply told and does not strike the chords of techno-babble to which some SF writers resort. It's good to see Brosnan back on form with some true and traditional science fiction.

Mark Westerby

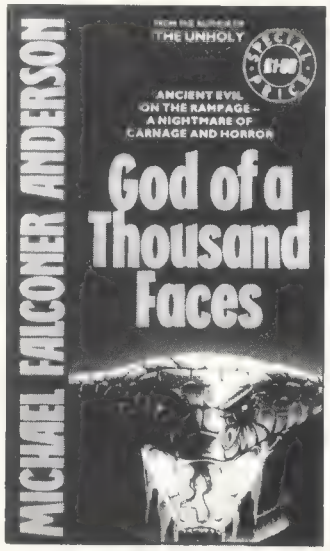
GOD OF A THOUSAND FACES

Billed as the Scottish King of Horror, **Michael Falconer Anderson** is always one for a ripping yarn – the emphasis being on 'ripping'.

This time the story (Heywood, paperback, £1.50) is largely set in India where a photo-journalist kills the child incarnation of the goddess Sedali in an auto-accident. Sedali is in turn the incarnation of Dacari, the God of a Thousand Faces, and her revenge is swift. The journalist soon develops a body odour problem, becomes very ill and falls further under the curse.

Anderson trots out too many clichés for my liking, but the story kept me entertained for a few nights and can easily be slotted into the Guy N Smith and Shaun Hutson moulds. The plot is too thin but the action is unrelenting and will certainly pluck you out of boredom during the in between times of those holiday trips.

Michael Glenn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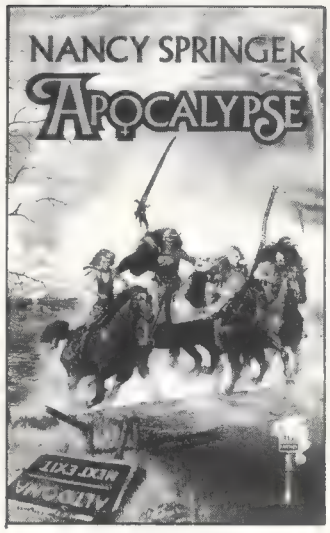
APOCALYPSE

Nancy Springer is best known for her mythological fantasies, but for her latest book, (Baen, £3.95), she has chosen the contemporary setting of Hoadley, Pennsylvania.



It's a bit of a dump, a coal-mining town which has been hit hard by recession, and the people are anything but cheerful in the face of impending doom.

Then Ahira, a mysterious lady with all the personal magnetism of Hitler, comes along and promises a return to prosperity. Her type of salvation may not be what even this torn populace needs, for she spells death and is one of the four women of the Apocalypse.

The book is written in Springer's usual seductive style with all the sentiment of legend in the making. Her move from past to present times shows that she can write about real life just as easily as mythological characters and lands. Thus she joins a small band of writers such as Raymond Feist, Tanith Lee and, to some extent, Stephen King. An instant winner on both the fantasy and horror fronts, this book is likely to storm the fans' dark affections.

John Gilbert

EARTHBOUND

A middle-aged couple arrive at a lonely beachside house to try and resurrect their ailing marriage. The man meets a demon lover whose appetite for sex takes its toll on his body energy and attitude towards his wife. If the relationship is not terminated both may be driven towards suicide or insanity.

Yes, **Richard Matheson's** *Earthbound* (Robinson Publishing, hardback, £10.95) is a stolid reworking of the supernatural love triangle so popular in the Fifties and Sixties. Matheson wrote some of his greatest works during those decades (*Hell House*, *I Am Legend*, *The Shrinking Man*) and the new novel, which was published in the US in 1982, appears to revisit old arenas. Even the style suggests the time at which Matheson was at the height of his powers.

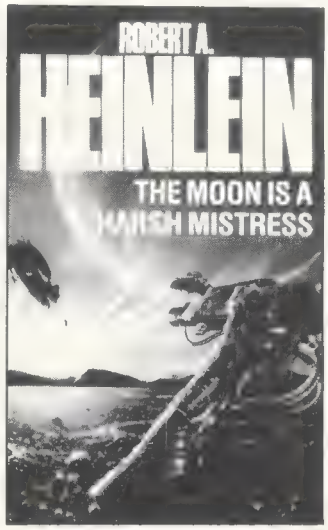
Matheson is still a master of the horror and thriller genres and *Earthbound* has an earthy, depressive atmosphere which is hard to shake off, even after you've finished reading. It matches the subtle caress of a Ramsey Campbell or Charles L Grant novel – after which you reach for an aspirin rather than a sick bag. It is for those who prefer to be left with the experience of a novel as a whole rather than a distasteful parade of a few grandiose gore scenes.

John Gilbert

THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS

They say that most artists are only appreciated after their deaths. **Robert A Heinlein** is not 'most artists', although I do tend to savour his work more now than when he was alive.

Certainly, his latest book (NEL, hardback, £11.95) is not needed to confirm that he is a master of SF, but it does re-affirm his posthumous hold on the genre. The Moon has become a civilised world, trading with a 21st century Earth, just as Japan now trades with Britain.

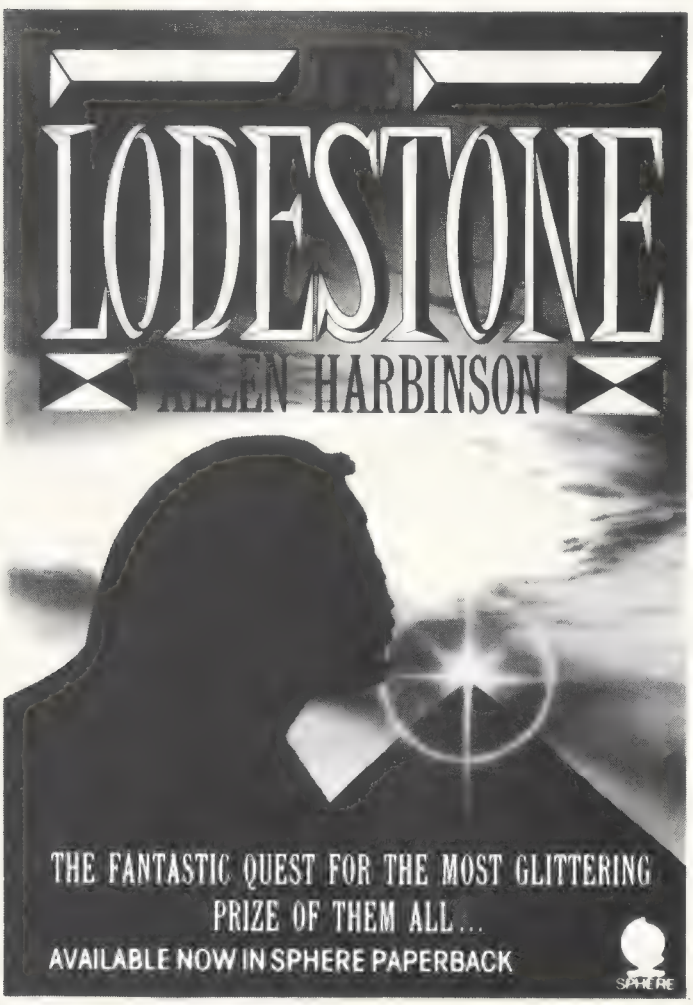


The community is controlled by the Authority, a dictatorial government that has dominance over all areas of lunar life. No one can escape because of the Moon's low gravity when compared to Earth.

Manuel Garcia O'Kelly is, however, the exception who can withstand high gravity and acts as a freelance computer genius. Joining him in his efforts to rid the Moon of its autocratic regime are a beautiful freedom fighter, an exiled intellectual and a computer called Mycroft Holmes. They start out on their mission believing that the Authority is the ultimate evil and Earth-like government the ultimate goal. But such is not the case.

The book is tightly plotted and short, by Heinlein's standard, but nonetheless carries the depth of feel in community and geography for which the author is famous. It is also lighter on humour than many of his other works; it extols irony rather than flagrant wit. It is certainly for the connoisseur of science fiction and a welcome continuation of the Heinlein literary dynasty.

Mark Westerby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WITCHFIND

Actor Richard E Grant fought off the likes of Sean Connery and Michael Douglas to play the sixteenth-century witchfinder against Julian Sands' brutally handsome, eponymous villain in Medusa Pictures' latest movie, Warlock. The result is a move away from gross-out gore toward the humour and good old-fashioned evil of the Hammer horror days. John Gilbert investigates.

There's not much call for witchfinders in modern America. The witches and warlocks who live there are, generally, a benign lot, who follow the Old Religion and cast a few harmless spells to make life a little better.

The same cannot, however, be said of the olden times when warlocks rode the skies, wreaking destruction on life and crops, fostering evil wherever possible and carrying the Devil's work to whoever would believe.

Richard E Grant knows about warlocks in both time periods. Indeed, he has dealt with the most evil of them – in the shape of actor Julian Sands – during the recently released film *Warlock*. It's a new occupation for a man who has played such diverse roles as an out-of-work actor in the drama *Withnail and I*, and a salesman with a boil problem in *How to Get Ahead in Advertising*.

"You see the tongue being spat out into the frying pan with a hisshh, and the audience goes 'aaggh!'"

He is a newcomer to the fear genre, but his baptism has been a lot gentler than many actors who have cut their teeth, and other bodily parts, in roles as victims in slasher movies. *Warlock* has been granted a PG certificate, an unusual phenomenon in the world of horror.

The movie, in which the warlock is after a Devil's bible called the Grand Grimoire, originally contained many of the gore scenes you associate with horror, but the producers could not pass over the opportunity to break the 18 barrier with only minor cuts. 'In the American version, which for certificate reasons they're not having here, there's a scene where the warlock bites the tongue out of the man who owns the house where the Grand Grimoire is. You see the tongue being spat into the frying pan with a hiisshh, and the audience goes 'aaggh!'. They've shown it at previews in the States and when they've shown it without this scene people think that the warlock is fairly nasty, but when he does this there's continuous talking through the next two scenes because they think he's going to tongue-sandwich somebody else again later in the movie.'

Some gore scenes did get through, although there were second thoughts from the distributors. 'I don't think Medusa even wanted the finger-chopping scene to be in but, in the circumstances, I think the gore was more than appropriate.'

Gore fans might argue that a 15 certificate may have a wider appeal but will keep the true horror fans away because the standard horror content is minimal. *Warlock* holds off that criticism with an clever performance by Lori Singer as a young woman who is cursed to age a decade a day, coupled with a wonderful sense of macabre humour. 'That's what I really liked about the script, that it's comic and a bit of horror.'

The movie also heavily relies on acting ability. 'There's not an enormous amount of special effects. You can't just transform yourself, or fly, or turn into a bat. The warlock's gotta do pretty gruesome things to be able to fly and I can't fly at all other than in an aeroplane and that can be a major shock to the system.'

PUPPET ON A CHAIN

Grant's childhood and his beginnings as an actor chart a strange enough tale in their own right. He was born in Swaziland, as far from Hollywood or Pinewood as you are ever likely to get, and did not rise from a family with any background in entertainment. 'I grew up in a place that had no television or theatre, just one movie house that showed everything from *Kung Fu* to the worst westerns. The movies came in for three days, so if you liked something you'd have to go to all nine showings. I had marionette puppets when I was a kid and I grew up with that, so movies were a fantasy outlet.

He went to the University of Cape Town to do a combined arts degree and diploma in theatre training. At the same time he co-founded a theatre company but left after several years because of his dissatisfaction with the political climate. 'It's a still waters

situation out there and the kind of theatre that you're doing is playing to the converted anyway. So, it just seemed logical to come and live in England. It was interesting to spend five years there because a lot of things had started to happen, but not a place to spend the rest of your life.'

Grant has since played on stage, film and television but garners major enjoyment in front of a movie camera. 'I like films because you never have any repetition or have to do it every night. The money's good, you travel around.

'If somebody says they're going to fly – they fly. They don't say 'Oh, I've just seen somebody flying outside the door,' or, 'I heard someone fly past the door' – you see them. That's the process of making films as against the theatre. I'm always astonished when actors say how boring it is, how much sitting around there is. Yes, there is sitting around, but I find the process of doing it absolutely fascinating.'

BEEF JERKY

His work until *Warlock*, on stage and screen, has been firmly based in reality and he was slightly surprised to land the witch-hunter role. 'I never thought I'd be offered a heroic part, a tough type of character in a comic horror movie. I certainly enjoyed doing it.

'They'd initially wanted Sean Connery to play the part. They wanted a huge star, guarantee the money, a marquee name. Then they went to Michael Douglas. Then, I think, they went down the line and said, 'This is a concept genre movie. We don't need stars. It's a good story, we'll sell it.' So I think they thought, Julian Sands for the romantic, heroic part and at one stage they thought, because of *Withnail* . . . have another non-American to play the Devil. So they then re-thought that and reversed it round. Because they wanted somebody that had come from another time and place, somebody coming from England or from Europe with a Scottish accent – which was appropriate to the time in that part of America – I think that gave it an old world feel.

'They came over here. I tried to go in looking as mean as possible, I thought they're not going to see me as some alcoholic coward. And the producer said, 'If we gave you this part how would you play it?' I said, 'I'd play it like beef jerky.' He said, 'What?' The director thankfully knew what beef jerky was – dried meat which the Red Indians had lived on.

'So the producer said, 'Describe this.' So I said, 'A tall, thin guy . . . ' (trying to describe myself), 'who is very tough and sinewy and weathered and relentless.' And I subsequently found out that this beef jerky line is what convinced them that I could play this part.'

Once on the movie, Grant played his role to the full, performing stunt effects which even some of his contemporaries might have passed on. 'I enjoyed doing the stunt stuff. The people who did the stunts had done *Fatal Attraction*, so they were very good at working with actors who weren't Schwarzeneggers, getting us to look as good as possible and insisting that we do as much of the stunt work as possible.'

Grant did not have to be coralled into the stunts, he enjoyed every minute of the physically demanding work.

"I was more aware of her, with the problems of having that make-up on and the heat and everything, than I was thinking 'This is a 100-year-old woman.'"

'There was a scene outside a barn at the Mennonite farmhouse where I was dragged along by this rope along a gravel road. That was an Indiana Jones type stunt, gravel skiing. I've never done that before and that was interesting!'

BOILING POINT

The physical stunt work was not the only arduous aspect of the film. Lori Singer, the female lead who is largely known for her role in the *Fame* television series, rapidly ages during the film. 'She had so many hours of make-up and special effects on her that we tried to get through the scenes as quickly as possible. I was more aware of her, with the problems of having that make-up on and the heat and everything, than I was thinking 'This is a 100-year-old woman.''

Grant also had to put up with the heat created by props. 'That coyote-skin coat, which was made out of twenty old coyotes, was extemely hot and unpleasant to wear in the Mojave Desert – it was about 110 degrees. Very good in Boston, where it was about minus 20. There it wasn't warm enough and in Mojave it was too hot.'

Fortunately, the extremes in outside temperature were tempered by indoor work during the first and final stages of the movie. 'The graveyard scene in Boston was built on Raleigh film stage which is the biggest film stage opposite Paramount. It's an extraordinarily huge set, I couldn't believe it when I went in there, with the water's edge and the whole Boston sky-line. I was amazed because somebody said that they'd been to that graveyard even though it doesn't exist.'

Fancy a tongue sandwich? Julian Sands as a mean, post-modern Warlock

IN THE CAN

Some criticisms have been made about the special effects in *Warlock*. The animated hex effects, for instance, break the menacing dream and, if only for a few moments, turn a dark film into a Disneyesque picture. Grant is quick on the defence. 'Because of the budget and the kind of movie that it was, they weren't trying to get the flying as good as Superman's flying is and that's a pity.

'All of that was done in sequence, and certainly when we were throwing up that ectoplasm they told us very specifically, with drawings and animated footage, how that was going to be done. So it was a case of vomiting all over the place and making the right noises and that certainly gives the right impression.'

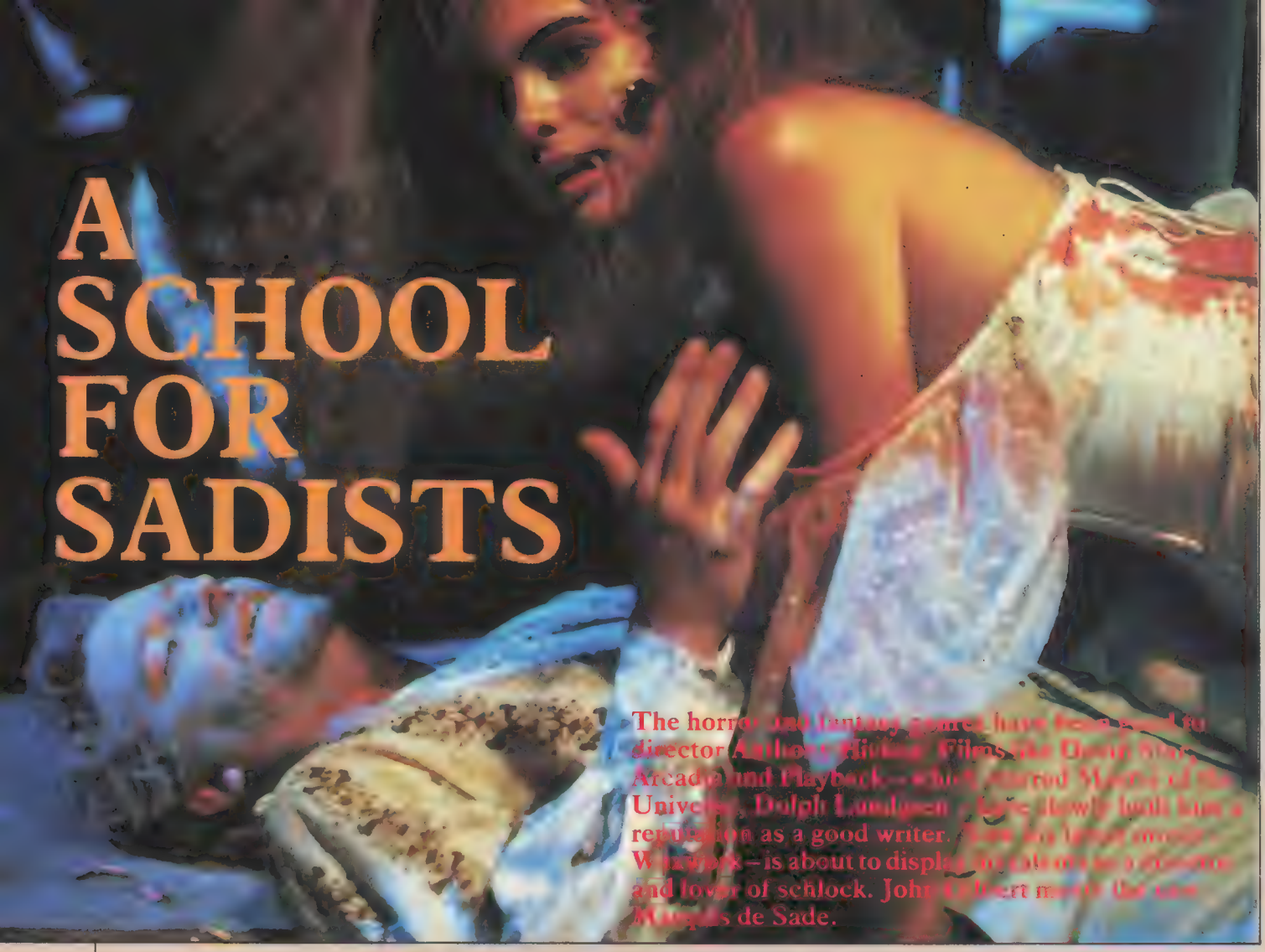
Despite the often painful drawbacks of starring in horror movies, Grant would like to make other supernatural flicks and believes that the United States holds much of the action in the genre. Grant has two new films on the way and a baby in the can. He dotes on the latter but will, as yet, not discuss the films because of contractual obligations.

Further Stateside work is a possibility but, despite his love of America, he cannot see a permanent film future across the Atlantic. 'The number of English actors who work, or can work, permanently in America is limited. Who is there outside of Connery, Caine and Bob Hoskins? And even Hoskins is essentially an English actor who can play American roles. That's three people.'

No doubt there is always room for a talented fourth.

ER GENERAL

A SCHOOL FOR SADISTS



The horror and fantasy genres have been graced by director Anthony Hickox. Films like Deep Star Six, Arcade and Playback – which starred Masters of the Universe, Dolph Lundgren – have slowly built him a reputation as a good writer. His latest movie – Waxwork – is about to display its talents as a director and lover of schlock. John Gilbert meets the new Marquis de Sade.

"*Waxwork* is really a collection of bits and pieces and I wanted it to shock everybody. The Marquis de Sade came about because I was feeling a bit horny one night"

Did your family influence your decision to become a film director? This is the most obvious question you could ask English-born Anthony Hickox whose latest film, *Waxwork*, has just been released by Vestron Video.

He has, after all, got one of the strongest pedigrees of any independent film-maker on either side of the Atlantic. His father, director Douglas, and mother, Oscar-winning editor Anne Coates, are both involved on the production side of the movie industry while his grandfather was none other than Lord Rank, the progenitor of the British film industry. Hickox is, however, almost nonchalant about the effects of his family tree. 'My mother went to America, so she didn't really encourage me to get into films. My father encouraged me, though. There was really nowhere else for me to go and it's no fun, when you're 25 or 26, just hanging around London doing nothing.'

His first film was a short feature, a ghost story set in England, which his father helped him to put together. It became a promo reel for young Hickox and soon Michael White, an English producer at Hemdale, showed an interest in the committed young director. 'Michael sent me out to the States to do a film for Hemdale but it fell through. Then he told me not to come back because there was nothing to do in England.'

HOT WAX

White could not have given Hickox better advice, though at the time it seemed like an ice bath after a cold shower. Fortunately, good news followed bad. 'I met Stephen Ahrenberg in the hotel where I was staying. We had dinner and were both a little drunk when I conned him into putting up five grand for a horror film. He said, 'Okay.''

Hickox seems startled about the ease with which he slipped into *Waxwork*, his directoral debut on a feature film, yet Vestron's faith in him has paid off in the form of a handsomely shot, very funny, and well-acted pastiche of the horror genre. 'The original script for *Waxwork* was a hommage to Hammer and schlock. It was never a serious movie, and Vestron wanted to do it.

Waxwork stars Zach Galligan – who rose to immediate stardom in *Gremlins* – as a college kid who takes his friends to visit a waxwork exhibition that has miraculously sprung up overnight in his home town. The owner of the exhibition, played with infamous zeal by David Warner, is, however, more than he seems.

It is the owner's ambition to release the ultimate evil on the world – and his works of wax, which include werewolf, vampire, and Marquis de Sade scenarios, are all part of the plan. Each exhibit has a character missing and Galligan's friends supply the missing components as they step into the scenes, never to step out again.

'The original script had no characters in it and when Vestron saw it they asked me to add fifteen minutes of characters.' The result is a lavish combination of OTT humour, special effects and outrageous plot. The outrage appears in the form of the Marquis de Sade who is the lynchpin of Warner's plan to resurrect ultimate evil. His sadistic enjoyment of the simpler things in life, such as whipping young girls, is shown with some relish in the movie. *'Waxwork* is really a collection of bits and pieces and I wanted it to shock everybody. The Marquis de Sade came about because I was feeling a bit horny one night. He was in an old film called *The Skull*, which stars Christopher Lee, and he seemed just right. I wanted something erotic in *Waxwork*.' And yes, there's nothing more erotic than sado-masochism.

Hickox, like his almost namesake, took great pleasure in playing a *Waxwork* cameo role as

the sadistic English prince in the de Sade sequence and producer Stephen Ahrenberg also takes a hand as a guard in this centrepiece of the movie. It's not an occupation that Hickox would choose over directing but he sees it as an interesting otherside to his production capabilities. 'Acting is fun, and that's why we deliberately put ourselves in *Waxwork*. I've just finished starring in a film called *Lobster Men From Mars* which is an English movie and I did that because you can't write or direct more than one film a year.'

MONSTER RAVING LOONY PARTY

Special effects are important even in pastiche horror movies and Hickox wanted the best for *Waxwork*. The best came in the form of Bob Keen, co-founder of British based FX company Image Animation (see Issue 6 for interview). Bob was busy working on the *Hellraiser* movies but the director thought he could persuade him to work on the US-based production. 'Bob and I originally worked on a small film called *Death Star* with Michael White. I asked him if he would do it and he agreed. He made all the effects in England and then flew them all over here.'

The results are impressive and include one of the most gory vampire feasts ever staged coupled with, arguably, the strangest staking scene ever witnessed, a werewolf sequence in which a man is torn asunder and a finale which has all the monsters you've ever imagined coming to life.

Finales are, in many ways, the most difficult aspects of a movie to plot and the end of *Waxwork* is no exception as wheelchair-bound Patrick Magee fights off a hoarde of monsters and tries to save the Earth from other-worldly infamy.

Several critics have condemned the finale as overly-shlocky or just plain pathetic, as reality crashes headlong into fantasy with hilarious results, but Hickox is unrepentant in his explanations of the whys and wherefores. 'I had two choices and decided we had to go for a great end battle. We had three days to make it and I wanted to make it like the *Casino Royale* battle. Unfortunately, the Americans didn't know how to take it.'

Director Anthony Hickox proves beyond doubt that wax works

The movie has done well theatrically and was a huge success on video. 'There were two versions of *Waxwork*; one for the cinema and one for video. It got an R rating for the cinema which means that anybody can go and see it if they are accompanied by an adult, and an X rating on video (which means only adults can view it). I'm still not sure which one you'll get in Britain, but it's easy to tell the difference. Everything in the R version is a lot shorter and there's less blood, particularly in the vampire sequence.'

WILD WEST

Hickox's next venture into vampire territory is a shocker called *Sundown*. It concerns a community of bloodsuckers living out on the range and, again, contains some high camp humour. 'We've entered John Ford country. It's set in the present but some of these vampires have been around for two hundred years and haven't adjusted to modern day living. It's an offbeat movie with one solid story. It's more Spielbergesque than anything I've done before and it has a happy ending. It's not necessarily just a horror/comedy, either. It's also a western and an adventure movie.'

Despite the director's solid description of *Sundown*, the movie has a few surprises for genre fans and lovers of the ill-fated soap, *The Colbys*. '*Sundown* stars Maxwell Caulfield as a psycho who is in love with the character played by Morgan Brittany. He looks really menacing with his hair slicked back.'

And the sometimes brutal attacks of critics who think that Caulfield can't act? 'You'll have to see *Sundown*.'

Caulfield is only one of a large, tapestry, cast. Many famous names are included on the list but it is Hickox's intention to surprise you as to who is in the movie. 'There's an ensemble cast of hundreds of characters and there are no front titles so you don't know who's going to appear.'

Sundown gets its US premiere in October, so we are likely to see it in the UK sometime in March of 1990. It will again be distributed by Vestron whose output of lively horror fare, as well as mainstream hits such as *Buster*, have made them quite a name in 1989. But is Hickox worried that he might get typecast as a horror director. 'I hope I get typecast, because it means you're making films and it's just a question of finding new ways of doing things.'

FEAR competition

Welcome to the WAXWORK MUSEUM

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Here comes a candle to light you to bed
Here comes a chopper to chop off your head

Yes, we have that candle, hot from the vaults at **Vestron** where their latest release, Anthony Hickox's *Waxwork* is about to go out on exhibition.

It's a cruel, sadistic tale of an evil man's quest to unleash the most unholy of powers upon the Earth. All he needs are victims to fill the empty places in his waxwork collection, and who more likely than the teenagers who have just turned up on his doorstep?

If you don't get a chance to catch the theatrical release of the movie – this is a big screen film so we would advise you to go catch it – we have **six copies** of the movie on video.

A *Waxwork* **exhibit could be on its way to you. All you have to do is tell us who provided the special effects for the movie,** write the answer on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope and send it to *Hot Wax Competition, Fear, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*. Our usual competition rules apply.

And who says wax wouldn't melt in our hands!

DEMON SEED

Monsters have helped Stan Winston climb up the corporate ladder of film production. Here he talks to Andrew Morentis about creating the ultimate demon.

Stan Winston has dreamed up some of the most diabolical creatures ever during his tenure on movies like *Aliens*, *Terminator*, *Predator* and *The Monster Squad*. It is not, therefore, surprising that his directoral debut, *Vengeance: The Demon*, should contain a creature, created by his own special effects workshop, which has to be seen to be believed. What is unbelievable, however, is the two years that it has taken to bring the film onto American movie screens and British video racks.

No-one is more astonished and annoyed than Winston. 'The main reason for the film's holdback was because of a company in financial jeopardy. The original company, the De Laurentiis Entertainment Group, was in financial trouble at the time when we finished the movie and all the films could not be released.

Vengeance was the first of the movies to be sold to MGM/UA for theatrical release in the US. They wanted it to be a Hallowe'en movie, because that's a hell of a big time in the States and that was one of the reasons for the delay. They had to wait for the Hallowe'en season. The movie got a small spot release over here, and that was disappointing.'

FORBIDDEN PLANET

Theatrically the film did not do any great business and attracted some very mixed audience reactions. Conversely, American video sales have been massive. Demons have always been a big draw for horror film aficionados but *Vengeance* is something special. It concerns a backwoods farmer whose son is accidently run over and killed while a group of teenagers are horsing around on motorbikes. Ed Harley, the farmer (played by Lance Henricksen), wants revenge and seeks out an old witch who personifies his desires in a demon who attacks and kills each of the kids. Harley eventually repents and confronts the demon, but in order to stop its awesome power he must sacrifice his life.

'The original story-line was based on a poem, but I included the parts about the demon being the psychically connected to Ed Harley. It's based on the classic science-fiction film *Forbidden Planet* which is the story of a monster from the Id, a monster created from the subconscious. In this case it's a manifestation of Ed.'

"We were looking for something more than a merely scary image in Pumpkinhead. As a symbol of out-of-control human emotion, the creature needed to bear some resemblance to a human being"

Pumpkinhead, as both the demon and film were originally called, had to be something original and, more importantly, startling from the first. Winston wanted something that would literally scare and produce a reaction of awe in a big-screen audience but, despite his almost veteran experience as a SFX artist, he left most of the creative work up to his creature crew. 'I was as involved as any director is involved. I'd do some sketches and then be involved with sculpting and all the different stages along the way.

'We were looking for something more than a merely scary image in Pumpkinhead. As a symbol of out-of-control human emotion, the creature needed to bear some resemblance to a human being. In this story the demon becomes more human each time it commits an act of vengeance. The creature needed to be a powerful and unique image. We wanted to create the ultimate demon, and I think we succeeded.'

Winston not only wanted to scare his audience with the demon but also to shock his cast. Nobody saw the monster until they met it on location. 'I wanted to preserve as much of the shock and fear as possible. The effect of seeing this creature for the first time should be very emotional.'

To ensure the necessary emotional rapport between cast members and the demon, Winston took special care with his choice of cast. 'We saw thousands of talented young actors and actresses, and I am convinced that we chose the best possible people for each role.'

One of the most appealing characters is Ed Harley's son, Billy, played by Matthew Hurley. 'We needed a very special child for the part of Billy. He had to be instantly endearing without being cloyingly cute. We all felt that Matthew Hurley was especially natural in his audition, and that was important to us.'

OUT OF CAMERON'S CLOSET

Winston is an old buddie of James Cameron and readily admits to Cameron's influence on his work and career. The atmospheric blue and orange lighting in *Vengeance*, for instance, bears a resemblance to the lighting on movies such as *Aliens* and *Terminator*.

But all directors have their influences, and Winston is an immensely creative film-maker who intends to be beholden to no-one. He is limiting himself to projects which he is directing and, in case some of you Schwarzenegger fans are wondering, he has no plans to be involved with the proposed *Terminator* sequel. 'No-one has approached me to be director for *Terminator*, and I'm limiting myself to projects that I'm directing.

'My second film is an action-adventure-comedy-fantasy which will be out at Christmas. It's action oriented and has a wonderful fantasy character which is state-of-the-art.' Yet another 15-cert breaker, and further investigation uncovers that it's a family film about a Goblin. 'It's not nearly as heavy as *Vengeance: The Demon*.

"I wanted to preserve as much of the shock and fear as possible. The effect of seeing this creature for the first time should be very emotional"

Winston fans should not worry, though. He still intends to stay within the wide boundaries of our genres. 'I always want to stay with fantasy, horror, and science-fiction. There's so much to do within those genres. I want to try my hand at comedy and, of course, there are always new fantasy creatures to bring to the screen.'

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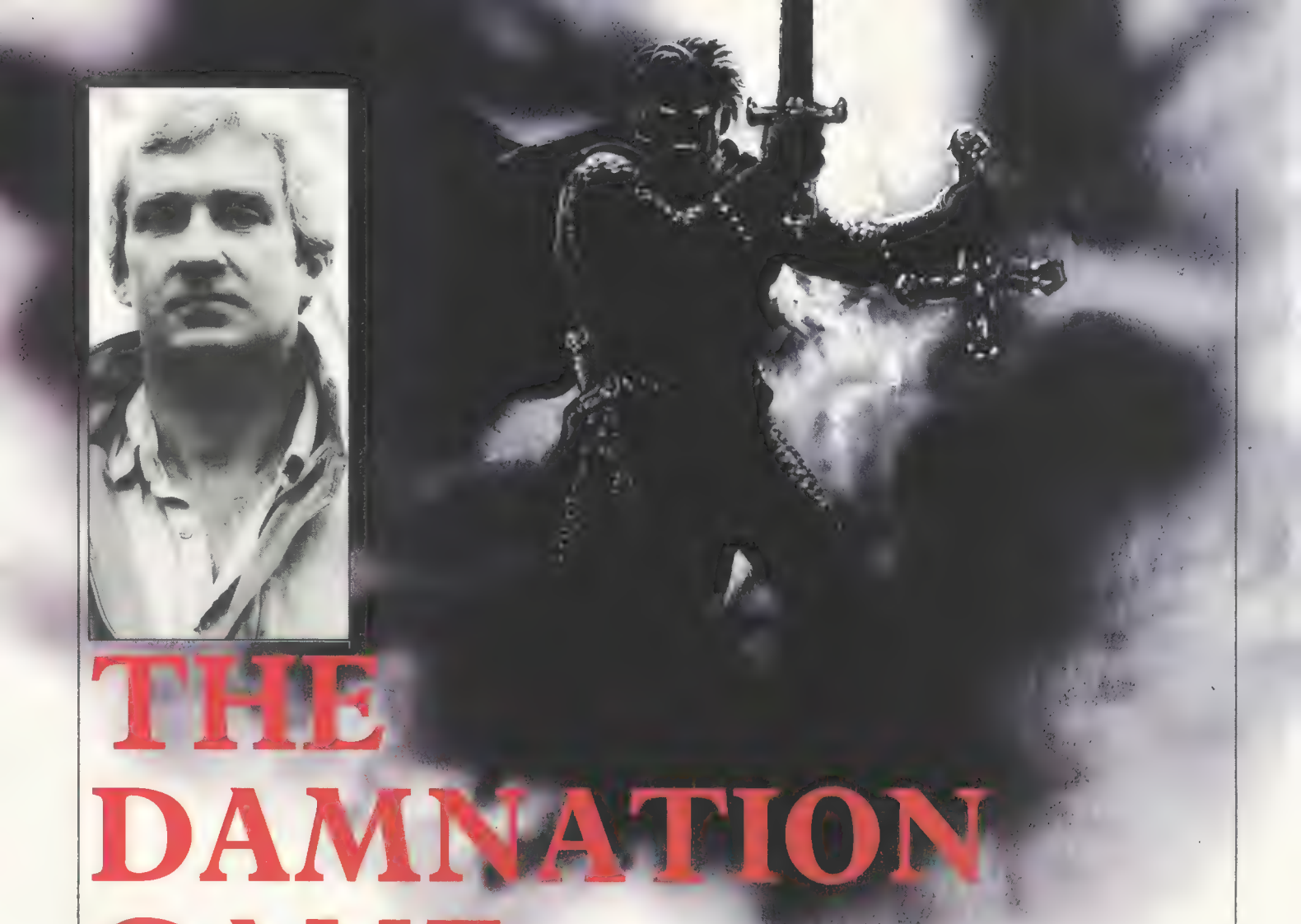

THE DAMNATION GAME

Devil worshippers or defenders of the faith? The Knights Templar of the Middle Ages have been cast as sorcerers and fornicators, but no one really knows whether the white brotherhood practised black magic or not. Horror author Daniel Rhodes believes he has a feel for those times and, in his first two novels on this theme, has resurrected an ancient Templar to prove the point. But are genre readers ready for a return to the Dennis Wheatley mould of horror? John Gilbert meets the man who is putting the cult back into occult-based fiction.

Strange symbols, grimoires clothed in human skin and the dark couplings of cowled figures. All are images of black magic, a forgotten field in the horror genre, but one which is undergoing a revival.

The restoration is being spearheaded by Daniel Rhodes, an American novelist whose two novels, *Next After Lucifer* and *The Adversary*, have during the past year built him a growing respect from first US and then UK readers. They follow the mal-adventures of a resurrected Knight Templar and diabolist, Guilhem de Courdeval, and a French trio who are determined to track and destroy him.

"That the Templars were not in compliance with Christian orthodoxy, there seems no doubt. But I can't see that that should have been a punishable crime"

Rhodes regards the books as straightforward novels rather than horror, though he acknowledges that the supernatural plays a great part in his plots. 'I've always liked the occult and I just chose that as a framework to work with, partly because of that attraction to it and partly because it gives me a form to express the particular kinds of ideas and concerns with which I most identify.'

His interest in the occult is historical, theoretical and, to a small exent, practical. 'I'm no scholar, but I do have a strong interest in medieval history, which comes out in the character Courdeval. I don't really know why that is. I've speculated that it has to do with the notion that, at that time, people seemed to be much more concerned with metaphysics. It overrode all of life.

"If Courdeval is based on anybody, I would have thought it would be somebody like Gilles de Rais"

'I can remember one of the first experiences that really got me going on all this. When I was a little kid, there was a travelling bus that would come around – I was growing up in Chicago – and I would always go in and get the Grimm's fairy tales, always concerned with witches and whatnot. I remember, when I was nine or ten, my older brother taking me to see one of those first Dracula movies and it absolutely terrified me. I would not sleep without a light on for weeks after that. I guess that sent me in that direction.'

Rhodes, like so many of his fellow horror compatriots, did not choose writing as a first career. He did a short stint in the US Peace Corps before moving to Montana where he drove trucks and worked on ranches. He finally became a carpenter but suddenly realised that he

was 'neglecting a part of my mind that needed to be fed'.

He went to the University of Montana and started to meet some of the writers who lived in the district. It was not, however, a contemporary writer who pointed the way of his potential career. 'The one who's influenced me the most is M R James. In fact, I dedicated the first work to him.'

SOULS FOR SALE

That first work was heavily based on the history of the Knights Templar who were originally seen as crusaders in the Holy Land during the Middle Ages but who were later condemned for outrageous acts of devil-worship and sodomy.

The anti-hero, Courdeval, the leader of a Templar sect who curses his captors from the fiery stake, appears to be based on historical characters but, Rhodes insists, is largely a figure of his imagination. 'I chose the Templars for two reasons; one, because of their occult associations and two, because of the setting.

'When I was in France (in 1971) I had some French friends at that time who had a villa down in the South. We stayed at this place and there was a fortress very much in the same relationship to the villa as the one in the book. They told me that it had been a Templars' chateau. All that stuff boiled together in my brain so I came up with the personage of Courdeval. If he's based on anybody personality-wise, I would have thought it would be somebody like Gilles de Rais.'

Despite Rhodes' denial of any scholarly traits, his medieval research allows him to more than summarily judge the charges against the Knights. 'Probably, the charges upon which they were tried were certainly exaggerated, trumped up, falsified. But I have to say too that I suspect there were things going on. Whether or not they were overtly occult or merely heretical it is hard to say. That they were not in compliance with Christian orthodoxy, there seems no doubt. But I can't see that that should have been a punishable crime.'

There is no firm evidence that the Templars conspired with occult forces, real or imagined but, as Rhodes points out, the sect certainly had the contacts if not the motive. 'A lot of them who were in the Holy Land, toward the later time of their stay there, did have contact with the Saracen princes. Sometimes they were captured and held to ransom and were exposed to the Eastern magical and occult ideas. So there's a very possible connection.'

"American movies are directed toward the adolescent audience – there's a market trend toward much more explicit gory sorts of horror and less of the psychological horror you used to see twenty years ago"

Although the occult provided horror with its base material during the Sixties and Seventies, the subtle occultism of *Next After Lucifer* and *The Adversary* is a stranger to those readers who have preferred gore as their staple diet. The occult and subtle horror is, however, resurgent and writers such as Rhodes are, arguably, about to have their decade. 'The reaction in the States was very low key. The first book got a couple of pretty nice reviews. *Adversary* got a really lovely *Kirkus* review, but that's about the only one I've seen. I did not make a great deal of money on them but I didn't do too bad.

FAUST BACK IN FASHION

Ghost stories and the occult have always been a part of British literature so it seems only natural that books such as *Next After Lucifer* are more readily accepted on the UK. 'The British connection came about through my agent and things have taken off from there. The British, as I hoped, are paying a great deal more attention to the books.

'I think you all have that tradition of ghosts and haunted houses and all that stuff, whereas ours only starts with Salem and that's limited to that one part of the country. In the States now it seems that the movies in particular, and the books, reflect popular culture.

'The movies are directed toward the adolescent, the teenage audience, and it seems to me that there's a market trend toward much more explicit gory sorts of horror and less of the psychological horror like you used to see twenty years ago when they were making movie like *The Haunting of Hill House* and *Don't Look Now*. Now what you get are *Return of the Living Dead Part 5* – I find it very entertaining, have no objection to it – but what falls flat is when the gruesomeness goes off with a bang twenty minutes into the movie and after that it's merely a repetition of the same. I don't find that nearly as interesting as the steady raising of tension.'

The pulse of tension within Rhodes' books hides the often fatalistic occupations of his plots. As *Next After Lucifer* and *The Adversary* move toward conclusion you gradually realise that their characters have no choice in their futures. 'I think you're pointing to a flaw in the writing and probably I did get heavy-handed with that, but the books are intended to be expositions of the whole business of free will and choice. In order to get across the points that I wanted to get across I did write them in the format of morality plays.'

Courdeval is the foil for those morality plays and a complex character whose motivations often exceed the scope of the book; but these may be further explained in another sequel which Rhodes seeks to write. Villain or anti-hero? Can even the author decide? 'I have to say that he is both. When I first started out with him in my mind he was just the essence of evil. But as he has developed, particularly in *Adversary*, I see him as a Faustian character who was an evil, cruel, man to begin with – that was the hand that he was dealt by fate, and living in a cruel time, obviously – but also as a man who wants more than a man is allowed to have. He realises that there is no possibility of getting this through normal channels. So he sells his soul and he does acquire more power but he also pays the price. Certainly he's still a villain but I can at least sympathise with his desires. The Faustian legend is very nasty.'

THE PENDULUM SWINGS

The Faustian mythos and the trappings of occult-worshipping anti-heroes appeal to Rhodes but he is very careful how he uses them in his work. Several authors have tried black magic fiction in recent times and their work has ended up on the remainder piles, but you will not find Latin passages and symbolic expositions on his pages. 'You can't bore your reader. That's the number one thou shalt not. And you have to cut the line between putting enough of that stuff in to get the sense of it, the colour of the painting, and not enough so that the reader starts to think 'Oh Christ, another paragraph of Latin, more black candles and scarlet crosses'. There's also the fact that I don't know a great deal about it, so I would have been stepping on my toes.'

The slight naivety on subject matter does not, however, stop him from believing that his type of fiction is on the way in again. Indeed, the portents are all there. 'We had a wave of occult interest in the late Sixties, early Seventies, when I was coming of age. Then, over the course of the late Seventies and the Eighties that died down and the consciousness of the generation was much more materialistic. Occultism and spirituality fell into disfavour and became a subject of mockery. But I think that's a pendulum that swings back and forth and probably within the next ten or fifteen years we'll see it at the fore again.'

"Occultism and spirituality fell into disfavour in the Eighties. But that's a pendulum that swings back and forth and probably within the next decade we'll see it at the fore again."

The futures for Rhodes and Courdeval are interlinked, though the writer is not sure how the sorceror will return. 'I do not specifically have an idea yet for the new Courdeval book. The last two have come to me pretty much just-like-that and I have confidence that it will. There might be more than one.

'As far as moving into other areas, I've written a third horror novel. It's a slightly gentler story, a more romantic story than my first two. It's actually a love story, but a horror love story. And the next novel I'm going to work on, the one that I'm here researching now, will be more in the occult vein and less in the pure horror vein. So, I am trying to branch out into different fields and stretch different muscles, but horror will remain my first love.'

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BLOBBERMOUTH SPEAKS!

It seeks. It slimes. It sucks. The Blob is on the rampage again and finally, after twenty years of silence, producer Jack H Harris gives the low down on both versions of the movie. FEAR's Alison McDonald put on a wetsuit and took her tape-recorder along.

The Blob is one of the all time great creature features. The original made Steve McQueen a star and the 1988 remake has made director Chuck Russell some career points in Hollywood, but the man behind both movies is proud producer Jack H Harris.

Thirty years after his initial run-in with the ever-changing mass from-outerspace, Harris, who is also in the film distribution business, is as enthusiastic about his first movie monster as ever. 'I've handled five hundred films and it's the only one that's still playing.'

Harris created the glutinous giant in conjunction with Irving H Millgate, Head of Visual Aids for the Boy Scouts of America. 'They made a feature called *Jamboree* and wanted me to act as consultant on national distribution.'

They travelled America promoting the kids' movie and, during those trips, Harris talked about his dream of moving out of distribution to become a producer. 'He asked me how I would go about it and I said I would take the budgets for two of those black-and-white poster movies and make a colour movie.'

Many people would argue that the Harris dream of becoming a producer was a little off centre when everybody usually wants to be a director, but the man loves hard work and that's what producing is all about. 'Everbody thinks of a producer as the guy sitting in the corner and smoking a cigar. But I have the opportunity to put all the elements of a project together.'

Finally, as producer, Harris knew what he wanted and Millgate fell in with his plans and even offered ideas for a plot line. 'We decided that it would be a mineral form of life and it would be liquid. But how do you kill it? Well, first you contain it . . . shit, you freeze it.'

Once the premise had been developed, Millgate worked the notion into a film treatment and submitted it to Valley Forge Films, a production company that specialised in low-budget television shows and 16mm features. Production began in 1957 at the company's studios in Pennsylvania on a meagre budget of $260,000. Harris laughs when asked to make a comparison between the new movie's $20 million and the money with which he had to make the original. 'There is no comparison.'

THE MEAN MCQUEEN?

There are, however, things he would have done if Blob mark one's budget had been higher. 'At the time I would dearly have loved the luxury of retakes and better special effects. I went into the first screening with my heart in my mouth, but I knew all the flaws and the audience didn't.

'There's also the possibility that if we'd had more money the magic we were able to achieve in the film might not have happened. That magic was largely due to the dedication of the crew and, in some respects, not having the money was a blessing.'

Harris paints a picture of crew unity which is borne out in the film, but several gossip sheets at the time pointed to heated disagreements between star Steve McQueen and director Irvin S Yeaworth. The producer decries any enmity on set, although he is brutally frank concerning the star's debt to the movie. 'Steve owes his career to *The Blob*. He was doing understudy work on Broadway and I caught him in a dramatic TV show on CBS in which he didn't say a word. He was always a 'star' but I personally never had any bad encounters with him.'

And what about a comparison between McQueen and Kevin Dillon, star of the new movie? Harris is full of praise for Matt Dillon's younger brother but points out a few differences. 'In Kevin I don't see the authority or the eye appeal that Steve had.'

WORLD DOMINATION

The other movie star is, of course, the Blob and, as Harris agrees, there are vast differences between the old and new creatures. While the old Blob relied on size to quash its victims, the new monster is fast and has shape-shifting abilities. There was a danger that the technical brilliance of the new movie would overshadow the human emotional relationships, turning the film into just another FX jamboree, but Harris is unconcerned. 'Yes, the special effects were state of the art and they were overwhelming. But if in the process of making the Blob come alive the human relationships are overshadowed, I can ride with that.'

He does, however, admit that those human relationships are important in establishing the social and political meanings within the new movie. 'The film's subtexts are put in there by innuendo. The primary thrust is, of course, to tell a story; but there is a feeling in most civilised societies that the government may be getting away with things we don't know about.'

Ominous tones indeed for the future of mankind, but you've not seen the worst yet, if Harris has his way. He has already redubbed a new soundtrack onto the original movie and has some hope for a sequel, although the remake did not do well in the States. The ending of the movie, with some Blobettes trapped in the Reverend's jar, has been set up for a continuation of the theme, perhaps into Armageddon. 'When you make a genre movie like this you always think of a sequel. The studio has the rights, but I'm not convinced they'll do it.'

Blob II may not squeeze its way out of the studio but Harris has a master plan for a movie which will see off all other creature features. 'Five years ago I started a project which I'm calling *Blabbermouth*. It's going to be very funny. The Blob is still there, but this time it speaks!'

Reuben is a car thief with a very special mission. To steal and deliver an experimental prototype to a man he's never met. No problems there but, as he drives along the arid Arizona roads, he begins to wonder what's under the bonnet. The answer becomes painfully apparent to him, but is it a secret you want to know? If so, read on . . .

DRIVING FORCE

PART 2

BY STEPHEN GALLAGHER

The gas jockey looked the car over and said, 'I'll be happy to fill her up if you'll just tell me where.'

He gestured with the pump nozzle, and Reuben walked with him around the back of the car. It was the closest inspection he'd given to a rear end since *Charlie's Angels* went off the air, and still he couldn't find any trace of a flap or a filler cap or anywhere at all for the gasoline to go. He checked for a trick license plate, for a false section on the bumper, for a movable section *anywhere*.

Reuben knew what he was doing. But he couldn't find a damned thing.

'It's my brother-in-law's car,' he said lamely, backing towards the driver's door. 'This is the first time I've borrowed it. Don't worry, I've probably got enough to get me home.'

Some way further down the road, he pulled off again and, alone this time, got down on his hands and knees for a look underneath.

He whistled. Up above, the car seemed conventional to the point of boredom. Down below it was a little more radical.

The fuel tank was big, easily four or more times the size of normal. It appeared to be made out of some kind of grey rubber that yielded a little when he poked at it, but not much; it was as smooth and as resistant as whale hide. As far as he could tell, it was completely sealed. All of the pipework had to be out of sight around the top somewhere. The transmission was completely boxed-in by a moulded fibreglass cowling, so few clues there; but down at the front end, ordinarily concealed from sight by the angle of the forward bumper, was a radiator design that he'd never

seen before. It resembled a series of angled blades, more like a weird piece of kitchen equipment than anything else.

He got up, dusting himself off and feeling a little uneasy. Maybe it had a little nuclear pile or something back there. Something that would break the oil suppliers' stranglehold for good, with a small price in defective cells and bone marrow and dumping-grounds that would have to outlast the civilisation that had produced them. Reuben started to think that maybe this whole thing wasn't such a good thing; what use was all the money in the world if you walked away from the job with your nuts roasted?

"Reuben was whiplashed so hard that all breath and sensation were driven from his body, and he couldn't even scream as the world outside the car went wildly out of control"

But whenever you got that kind of stuff you tended to get warnings and symbols everywhere, and here there had been nothing at all. So perhaps he was wrong. And anyway, what would happen to a nuclear-powered car in the event of a run-of-the-mill collision? You'd get a mushroom cloud at every major intersection.

No, that couldn't be it. Some kind of gas, maybe, with an access vent so unlike the usual that he'd looked straight at it and hadn't recognised it. Or some kind of battery, although this seemed the least likely because the engine note sounded more or less normal and every electric car he'd ever seen had tended to creep around like a bishop leaving a brothel.

And then he thought, who really gives a fuck anyway? And he got back in.

The fuel light flicker seemed to have stopped.

The tarmac surface of the road glittered like diamonds in the low afternoon sun. Reuben had one bad moment when a car from the Mohave County Sheriff's Department had passed him heading in the opposite direction, but he watched it in his mirror and it didn't turn. He wasn't certain how they carved up the territory around here between the County authorities and the statewide Department of Public Safety, but he knew that it wouldn't be safe to consider himself in the clear for some way yet.

The light began to flicker again a few miles after Peach Spring, but now it worried him less than it had before. After all, they wouldn't send the car out for an all-day desert drive if they couldn't rely on it to get around and back, would they? And he'd be in Kingman by the early evening, after which it would become somebody else's problem.

He settled back and tried to enjoy this more. The scenery was shifting from scrub desert to mesa country, real horse-opera stuff, except that he hadn't seen a horse or anything else alive beyond the outer boundaries of the big old road. He saw plenty of evidence of creatures that had ventured to cross and which would never get to see what lay on the far side, but none of these was too readily identifiable after being smashed flatter than the coyote in a Roadrunner cartoon. Otherwise he shared the road with those few trucks that had chosen the '66 over the Interstate – less crowding, less surveillance – and, try as he might to relax, the ever-present shadow of his own anxiety.

It wasn't just the fact of the theft. Living with that kind of knowledge was no problem for him, he'd been doing it for most of his adult life and more. What he didn't like was the sense of lessening control which had begun with the no-show of the transporter and then increased when he'd taken a look under the car. This whole thing had become deeper than anticipated, and he hadn't brought his water wings.

The dashboard light was back. This time, it stayed on.

He began to look for somewhere to stop.

Damn.

He hung up the 'phone and sat back in the booth, rubbing at his eye. It felt as if there were a dead spot somewhere behind it that was growing and which could burst at any time, flooding his head with decay. This time he hadn't even managed to speak to call-me-Bob. This time he'd been given a connection to an answering machine, and the whole thing was rank with the scent of a runaround.

After a minute he emerged from the booth and returned to his table. On this occasion he was in an honest-to-God old-fashioned diner with waitresses in uniform and muzak and a half-priced section for children on the menu. It looked as if it had been standing for six months and there were probably a thousand exactly like it, all over the country.

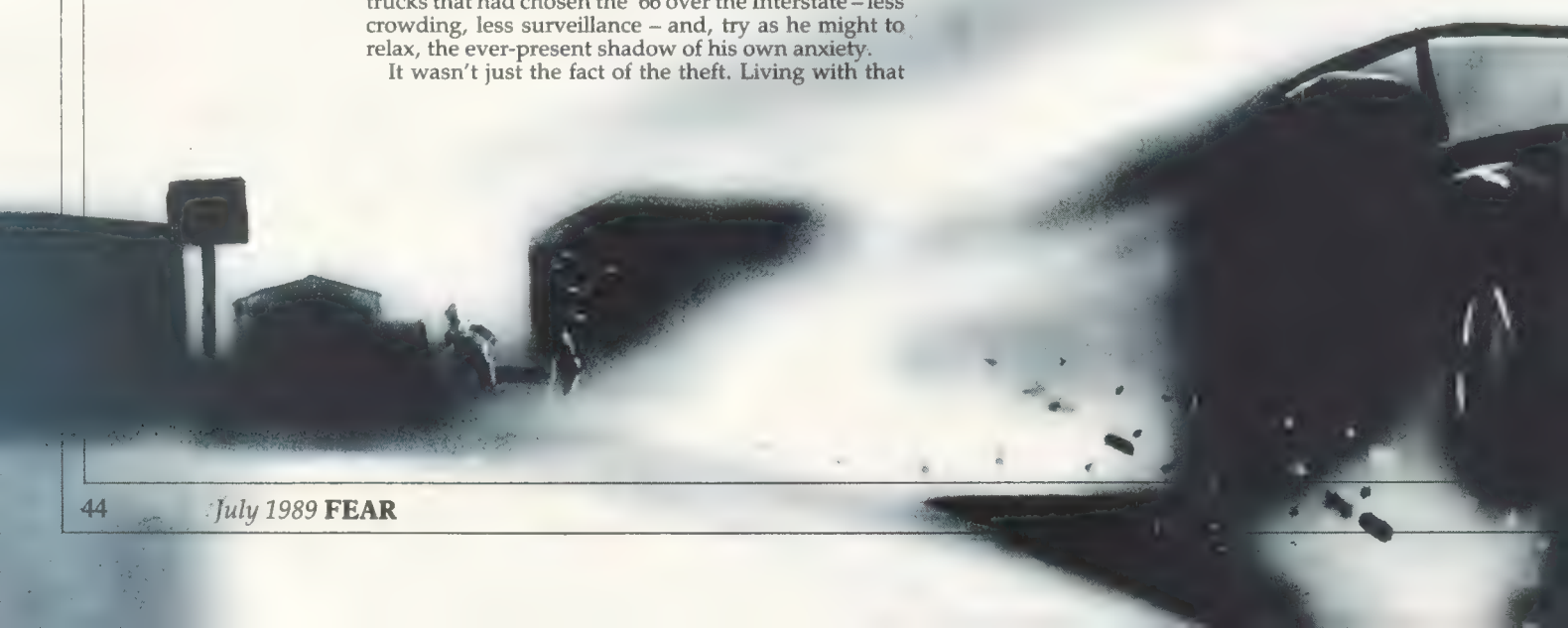
He studied the menu, but he had no appetite at all.

'Just an iced tea,' he said to the waitress, and the waitress went away.

He was by the window, from where he could just about see the car. He'd begun with no feelings towards it – sentiment over a car was strictly for teenagers and the emotionally retarded – but something was coalescing within him and it felt suspiciously like hatred. It was almost dusk now, the shadows long and deep, the sky a fierce gunmetal blue. The car sat out there like bad news waiting to happen.

Say he were to walk away from all of it, right now. Say he didn't get back in the car but simply asked around the three other people right here in the coffee shop or, failing that, walked out to the shoulder of the road and put out his thumb.

But he knew already that this wouldn't work. He couldn't dump the car here because he'd been seen and could be described, and it seemed fair to assume that the investigation of this particular theft would involve a little more zeal than the average inquiry. The only real option, apart from that of seeing it through and watching the risks increase almost by the minute, would be to drive on to somewhere else and make a fast switch to some other vehicle, preferably something mundane in the middle of a crowded parking lot. It would hurt to walk away from the money, but it would hurt even more to be dragged back to jail after being disowned buy his so-called employers.



The iced tea settled his stomach a little, although it didn't do much for his head. When the bill came, he noticed that the waitress had carefully circled the part that said *service not included*. With equal care, he bilked her of the tip and walked out.

He still hadn't settled his problem. He was barely an hour out of Kingman now, and the chances of finding somewhere closer to make the switch seemed fairly remote, in which case he might as well press on into town and stick with the arrangement as it stood. It would be dark pretty soon, and that could only work in his favour.

But the fact of it was, he was simply reluctant to get back into the car again. Come on, he told himself, stop acting like a fool and get rolling.

But then, as he came out and around to the driver's door, he saw something that he wouldn't have been able to see from the restaurant window. The angle would have been all wrong.

He saw that, two spaces along, there now stood a car with the roof bars and crest of the Mohave County Sheriff's department.

There was nobody inside.

Reuben didn't panic. Reuben was a pro. Reuben knew that his best interests would be served by getting away from here *now*, and with as little fuss or suspicion as possible. He got into the car, felt its seat conform and saw its mirror re-align, and he started up.

FUEL, the dash demanded.

Fuck you, thought Reuben, let's go.

He'd backed out of the slot and was rolling forward when he saw the Sheriff's Deputy coming out and around from the back of the building.

He was tall, big-boned, fairly young. He was carrying a paper bag from the kitchens and didn't seem to be in any hurry, and in that moment Reuben knew that his vehicle was either unreported or unrecognised. All that he had to do was stay cool and drive away, and his only worry would be that whatever weird energy source was powering the car should last until he hit civilisation again. He was coming up level with the cop now and the cop wasn't even looking at him, but was ducking down to take an interest in something inside his own vehicle as he approached around behind it.

'Hey, Ramsey,' the Deputy was calling, and out of the corner of his eye Reuben saw a shadowy-figure sitting up inside the patrol car; someone who'd been leaning back with the seat reclined, and that was all that he saw because suddenly the wheel jerked over in his hands and his own car put on a massive burst of speed, and Reuben had less than a second to register with awe that his own face through the windshield was the last sight that the Deputy was ever going to see. He stamped down hard on the brakes, and the brakes screamed and made no damned difference at all.

The car hit the Deputy, carrying him forward.

One strawberry ice-cream shake hit the windshield, and burst.

The car slowed and roared, like a blender suddenly choking on something tough.

The Deputy's hands, hooked into claws, screeched their way down the hood as he was dragged under; Reuben got a flashed mental polaroid of the young man's agonised face in the moment before he was sucked down and out of sight, and then the car was leaping forward again and Reuben was fighting for control. As it fishtailed out into the roadway he heard two sounds like falling sandbags on the bodywork, and he didn't have to look to know that he was being fired upon. He hunched down, knowing that it wouldn't make a bit of difference but unable to stop himself.

One small consolation. The FUEL light had all but gone out.

Reuben leaned hard on the accelerator, pushing it right up to the limit; he could have hit warp speed and even that wouldn't have been fast enough for him. Whoever had fired the shots would surely be close behind. Reuben was shaking. He'd done nothing. The wheel had simply turned in his hands, turned so hard and so fast that his grip had been broken, and as for the burst of speed . . . well, God alone knew where that had come from. He checked in his mirror. This was no good, no damned good at all.

The first dirt turnoff he saw, he took.

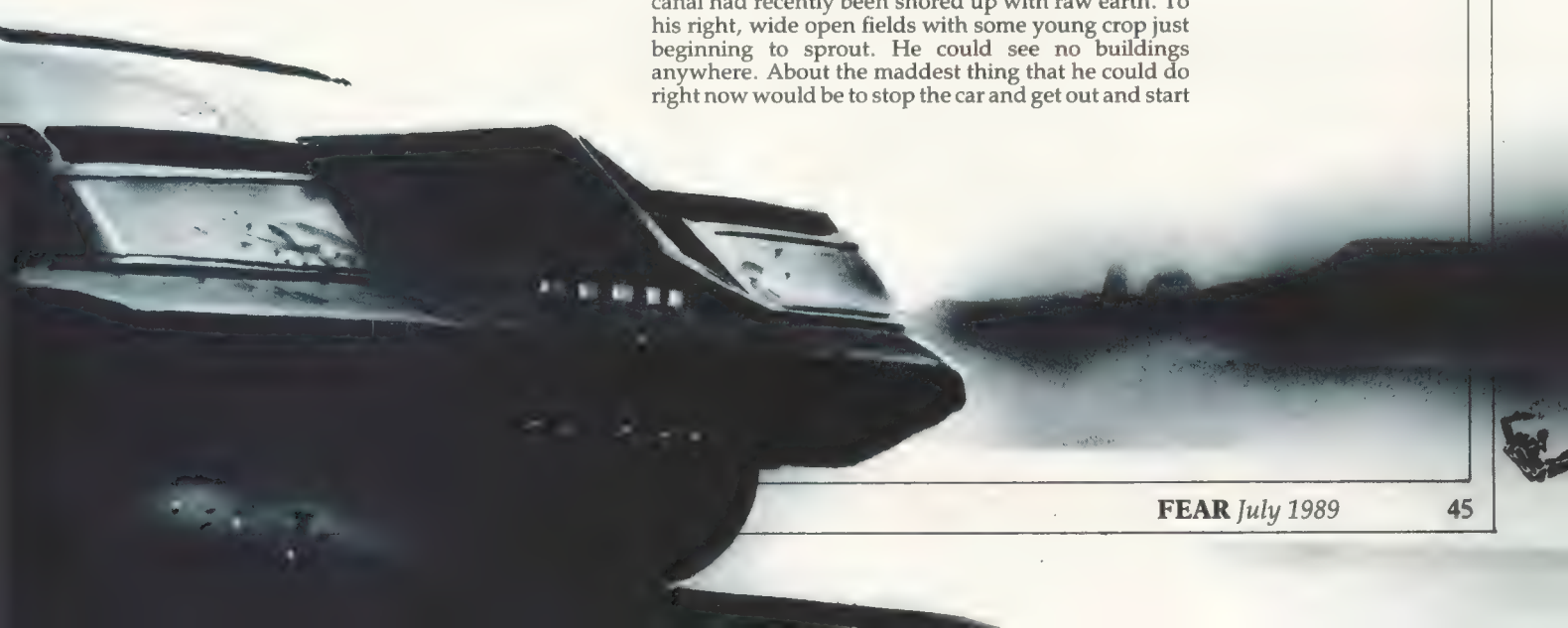
Now there was no question about it, the car was to be dumped at the first opportunity. A farm vehicle, a pickup truck, he'd take *anything*. He glanced backward to look for the bullet hits, and the rearview mirror kept a track on him like an evil eye. He was cold, he was sweating. The shakes were beginning to come under control, but he felt no better for this.

The land was darkening, the sky was on fire. If he kept his lights out and tried not to raise too much dust, he'd have a chance of getting some distance unseen. Response time couldn't be too fast, not this far out of town. For the first time in a number of years, Reuben began to pray. He prayed, not for enlightenment or forgiveness, but for a farmstead with no dogs and nobody home and something driveable standing out front.

Come on, God, he pleaded. It's not like I was asking for world fucking peace, or anything.

The dirt road crossed with another, and then ran on alongside an irrigation canal for a way. The sides of the canal had recently been shored up with raw earth. To his right, wide open fields with some young crop just beginning to sprout. He could see no buildings anywhere. About the maddest thing that he could do right now would be to stop the car and get out and start

STEPHEN GALLAGHER is the best-selling author of *Valley of Lights* and *Down River*, recently published in hardback by NEL. He lives in the north of England with his wife and young daughter and is currently preparing his next novel and film adaptations of his existing work.



"When the membrane finally went, it went all at once and dumped its entire contents out into the canal bed. Reuben threw back his head, and yelled for Jesus"

running, but that was exactly the impulse that he was having to fight. He wanted to go home. He wanted dirt and smoke and crowds and muggers.

Ahead of him, the track made a sharp bend and a climb to cross over the canal by a bridge that appeared to have been constructed out of big girders and railway sleepers – nothing too elegant, but nothing that would fall down in a hurry either. The land around here was well-used, anybody could see that. Somebody had to live on it, as well as work it . . . and Reuben could just about visualise him now, a hard man in a baseball cap with a few gold teeth and with forearms of carved oak, and Reuben's heart sank at the prospect. He didn't want to get caught in the car, nor did he want to get beaten shitless in his efforts to pick up another.

He'd had better days than this one.

He slowed, hit the rising ramp to the bridge. It was barely more than a single car's width and there were no side rails. They were probably bringing in extra units and helicopters right now, squaring off the map and planning their search. And roadblocks – Reuben didn't even want to *think* about roadblocks.

In the event, he didn't get much of a chance; because as he reached the crest of the ramp he saw the oncoming vehicle as if in a mirror, and as he started to swerve the County vehicle with its driver named Ramsey did exactly the same. There was no way of coming out of this clean. It was either a head-on collision or drive off the side of the bridge, and what actually happened was that both cars met corner-to-corner as they tried to swing apart; Reuben was whiplashed so hard that all breath and sensation were driven from his body, and he couldn't even scream as the world outside the car went wildly out of control, like the last few feet of a broken movie before the end pulls through and the screen blazes white. He felt his shoulders hit the glass, he felt the glass give.

The world tumbled. Then, with a bone-breaker of a jolt, he bounced on the ground and then rolled. Before he was still, the car came down just a few yards downstream and turned completely end over end. Broken glass and loose components showered around; the rearview mirror spun by, trailing wires like a pulled tooth.

The car came to rest, on its side and with one set of wheels high in the air.

Am I dead yet, or what? Reuben thought, dully.

He was lying in the shadow of the bridge, this much he knew. He was down in the cut of the canal, but now he could see that the canal itself was little more than a feeble trickle at the lowest part of the scoop. His legs might have been in the water, he couldn't tell.

Nothing much hurt, and that didn't sound too good either. His car's wheels were spinning loosely and he could see the full length of its underside exposed to the last rays of the sunset. He wondered if he'd have the strength to sit himself upright but when he tried, nothing happened.

'You think this is bad?', a voice said. 'This is nothing. This is nothing next to what you're gonna get.'

He could turn his head, just about.

She came stumbling across his field of view. She was unsteady and her uniform was dusty and torn, but she was all in one piece. She was about 28 years old and she was scared and angry in roughly equal measures. There was a drawn gun in her hand, a black revolver with its hammer cocked and ready to fire.

Her name, he could only assume, was Ramsey.

She stopped before him.

'Get up,' she said.

Reuben made the effort and this time he dragged himself about six inches, and that was the best he could do.

'I can't feel my legs,' he said, and heard his voice coming out as a dry croak.

She hesitated, wary of him and not ready to be fooled. 'You'd better not be lying to me.'

'I only wish I was.'

She moved all around him, looking him over while staying beyond his reach.

'You *do* look all twisted,' she admitted finally, and seemed more disappointed than anything else. She took a couple of steps back and holstered the gun at her hip. 'Feel any pain?'

He managed to shake his head a little.

'Not that I'm worried either way. What you did to Jack is the worst thing I ever saw anybody do to a human being. You ran him down like a drunk after a dog.

'It wasn't me,' he tried to tell her, 'it was the car.' But she wasn't even listening to him.

'I might've known it. I might've known I'd chase you down and you'd turn out to be a shitty little piece of nothing. I wanted you dead, but this is better. Because the way it looks, you're gonna be wearing a nappy and riding a wheelchair from now on.'

She started to back away.

'Don't just leave me here,' Reuben croaked.

'My radio's out,' she said, 'I'll have to walk to a 'phone. It'll take me a while. Don't think I plan to hurry.'

'You'd leave me like this?'

'I don't intend moving a spinal case. Maybe they can fix you, maybe they can't. But if was me, I'd lie dead still and think about selling my ice skates.'

She turned and picked her way up the bank, scrambling a little where the earth gave way. He saw her briefly silhouetted against the sky when she reached the top of the levee, and then she was gone.

He wanted to call after her, but he didn't.

From here he could see her patrol car, on the far side of the bridge. It had slipped down and was more or less standing on its nose, blocking the archway from top to bottom with its rear end against the parapet. At first he thought that he could hear its engine running but no, that sound was coming from somewhere else; it was his own car, the stolen one, putting out a low chug-a-chug that was barely a notch above stalling. He started to turn his head to look back at it again, but had to stop and cough, hard; he covered the cough with his hand, and then he looked in his hand and saw more blood and spit than he really cared to.

He wiped it on himself. Laundry was not his greatest worry right now.

The car was still on its side, but poised as if a strong wind might rock it over. The forward bumper had

been torn away by the collision, exposing that weird bladed radiator arrangement almost completely. Further back, he could see the big rubber bag of the tank; at this angle it was bulging out of the car's underside like something obscene. Something had cut loose so that it had started to hang; there were surface rips and tears in it from the rollover, and from the deepest of these some kind of fluid was beginning to leak out. The whole arrangement had the look of the guts from a slaughterhouse carcass, pale and veined and bloodless and blue.

And as for the leaking fluid . . . well, who could say what it was? From where Reuben lay it looked thick and clear, almost a colourless jelly, and it hung in a big pulsing teardrop like something hugely magnified. As Reuben watched he almost thought that the size of the drop was increasing but then he saw that it wasn't, it was the bag that was beginning to split.

Reuben stared, fascinated.

The downward pressure grew, stretching the wound.

And when the membrane finally went, it went all at once and dumped its entire contents out into the canal bed.

Reuben threw back his head, and yelled for Jesus.

It all came out in one great, amoeboid mass like half a ton of aspic; and clearly seen in the aspic were small birds, snakes, and tiny flaws and imperfections that were probably the remains of insects. The yellow dog had been stripped down to its bones, all of them jumbled up and only its sinewy head to identify it for certain; the county patrolman was in better shape, skinless pieces of him still recognisably human and the tatters of his uniform suspended in the digestive medium like shreds of rind. When the jelly met the miserable trickle of the canal, it hissed like a poker and started to steam.

Its balance upset, the car swayed once and then started to tip. With a grinding and splintering, it slammed back down onto its wheels and then jounced around a little as if getting the feel of the ground again. Its exposed gatherer-blades were facing Reuben like an ear-to-ear grin, and not one that promised much in the way of friendship. He was damned glad that he wasn't facing it on the road, and that there was nobody now behind the wheel.

There was a crunching of stones.

The car rode up slightly, taking in the uneven ground.

Reuben looked around him in growing terror.

The engine was running, the shift was still in *Drive*; the automatic transmission was inching it forward, the car virtually filled the canal bed from one side to the other. Something whined with the sound of damage, but didn't seem to be holding it back.

Reuben's mind screamed at his legs to move. After a lifetime of habit, it wasn't conceivable that they shouldn't respond.

But they were strangers to him now.

Using only his hands, he turned himself over. It was harder than he'd ever dreamed would be possible. He dug his fingers into the dirt, and dragged. He felt his nails tear, but that was fine. That was pain, and pain was life, and life was something that he'd never thought about deeply but had suddenly decided that he was very much in favour of. Whatever it cost him, whatever the risk of furthering the injuries that he had, he would drag himself up the levee and out of the path of the approaching – you should pardon the expression – carnivore.

The sun-hardened earth slid by underneath him. The angle of the levee increased, and so did the strain. The pumping of his own blood rumbled like heavy machinery in his ears.

He'd covered barely a yard, but it was working.

It was working.

And then it wasn't.

His weight seemed to increase, sucking all the strength out of his grip. Maybe he'd gone at it too hard. Maybe he needed to pace himself. He glanced back to see how much distance the car would have to cover.

The answer was, none.

The gathering blades had opened in silence. A full-width road scoop had lowered in silence. Reuben's legs were already inside.

For the second and last time, Reuben threw back his head and yelled for Jesus.

He'd definitely had better days than this.

"He felt his nails tear, but that was fine. That was pain, and pain was life, and life was something that he'd never thought about deeply but had suddenly decided that he was very much in favour of"

DAUGHTERS OF DA

OUT OF THE KITCHEN, INTO THE NIGHT

Shame on the publishing industry! Best-sellerdom and weighty publicity budgets are balanced in favour of the male horror writer. Yet women are just as agile and inventive as the men in the genre – maybe more so. In the conclusion to her survey of assaults on the male dominated field, Di Wathen whets our appetites for great female fiction and draws attention to a striking imbalance in the book trade.

Shirley Jackson, a giant amongst horror writers, was a practising witch. She wrote ghost stories (*We Have Always Lived in the Castle*); a Gothic thriller (*Hangsman*); a psychological thriller (*The Bird's Nest*); on Armageddon (*The Sundial*); and on a haunted house (*The Haunting of Hill House*). But her themes were never that obvious. *The Sundial* is peopled by the insane, *Castle* seems relatively normal (until you realise that the three protagonists are dead!) and *Hill House* concentrates on the hauntings within her characters' minds, magnified by external hauntings. Madness is her strength: the twelve occupants of Halloran Mansion are the focal point of *The Sundial*, not the ending world which takes place off stage, if at all. Merricat Blackwood's paranoia and Elizabeth Richmond's split personalities are the focus of *Castle* and *Bird's Nest*. The stories are often wittily and quirkily told, and the emerging madness is horrific and disturbing.

Four mainstream novelists who delved into horror on occasion were **Marghanita Laski**, with *The Victorian Chaise-Longue* (1954) in which a modern girl takes on the life of a Victorian invalid; **Elizabeth Jane Howard** who wrote three stories for *We Are For the Dark* (1951) – the other half was by Robert Aickman – **Norah Lofts** as Peter Curtis with *The Devil's Own* (1960), which was filmed by Hammer as *The Witches*, *The Claw* and *Gad's Hall*; and **Daphne Du Maurier** whose story *The Birds* was abused to good effect by Hitchcock and is included in her *Classics of the Macabre* (1987).

Arkham House managed two female collections in the 1950's – **Leah Bodine Drake's** *A Hornbook For Witches*, an odd self-financed book of poems, and *The Curse of Yig* by Lovecraft protege **Zealia B Bishop**. Lovecraft's influence can also be seen in the *Mythos* stories of **Hazel Heald**.

Elizabeth Walter, author of five collections headed by *Snowfall* in 1965, had to wait until 1979 for publication of her Arkham compilation, *In the Mist*. She claims, 'I was born interested in the supernatural'. Always excellent, her best stories are, arguably, *The Spider*, *The Sin Eater* and *Davy Jones' Tale* which is her favourite tale and is reminiscent of Hope Hodgson. Dennis Wheatley described her as 'positively brilliant'.

"A mixture of gothic, SF and mainstream obsessive describes the work of Angela Carter, whose bizarre blending of ingredients creates something really special."

Rosemary Timperley is a prolific writer of predominately gentle ghost stories. Her first, *Christmas Meeting* (1952), has a Yuletide visit from a long dead poet. *Some Travellers Return* is grimmer; a white room is haunted by a black one, with murder the cause. She has also done radio work, including scripts for Capitol's *Moment of Terror* series, and edited several volumes of *The Ghost Book*.

Charles Dickens' descendant, **Mary Danby**, is another writer/editor. She edited *The Fontana Book of Great Ghost Stories* from volume five and *The Armada Ghost Book* series. Her stories include *Harvest Home*, set on Marna where islanders drink Risos grown with love – and blood – and *Robbie*, the grisly tale of a retarded boy.

DEADLY FRIENDS

Flannery O'Connor's novels are rooted in the American Deep South. *Wise Blood* (1968) and *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960) mix religion, evil and fear. O'Connor died at the age of 39 from a hereditary disease. Her style of writing, Southern Gothic, has become a sub-genre in itself. Fiction by O'Connor, Eudora Welty and Carson McCullers paved the way for *Forbidden Fruits* (1986) by **Maggie Davies**, set on a haunted Deep South plantation; **Ardath Mayhar's** *The Wall*, 'a novel of murder, abduction and the supernatural', and **Billie Sue Mosiman's** stories like *Good Samaritan*. Her psycho-suspense novels *Wireman* and *Slice* are strong on atmosphere and characterisation.

Voodoo occurs in **Dana Reed's** *Deathbringer*. Death comes to East Cove's residents, a mysterious black van roves the streets, and deformed Frank may not be as securely restrained as one may hope . . . With cruelty and horror aplenty. Reed's *Demon Within* is a graphic stalk-and-slasher novel, with an inhuman butcher and perhaps a few too many weirdos for credibility. *The Summoning* shows that rock music really is bad for your health! Reed is a writer to watch.

A mixture of gothic, SF and mainstream obsessive describes the works of **Angela Carter**, whose bizarre blending of ingredients create something special, as in her collections *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) with twisted retellings of traditional fairy tales, and the strange *Fireworks* (1974). Her novels include *The Magic Toyshop* and *Nights at the Circus*, introducing Sybil the mystic pig, among others.

On more traditional ground, we have **Diana Henstell** with *Friend* (filmed as *Deadly Friend*); **Elizabeth Wade** whose *Ashes of Tamar* has evil unearthed at an archaeological dig; **Susan Hill's** ghostly *Woman in Black*; **Mary William's** often humorous ghost stories; and **Katherine Kurtz**, better known for her fantasies, who combines witchcraft and Hitler in *Lammas Night*.

One writer who needs no introduction is **Virginia (VC) Andrews**. Her psychological saga of ill-treated children began with *Flowers in the Attic* (1979). *Heaven* (1983) heralded another major series. She states the reason for her popularity is because 'I think I tell a whopping good story'. Millions agree.

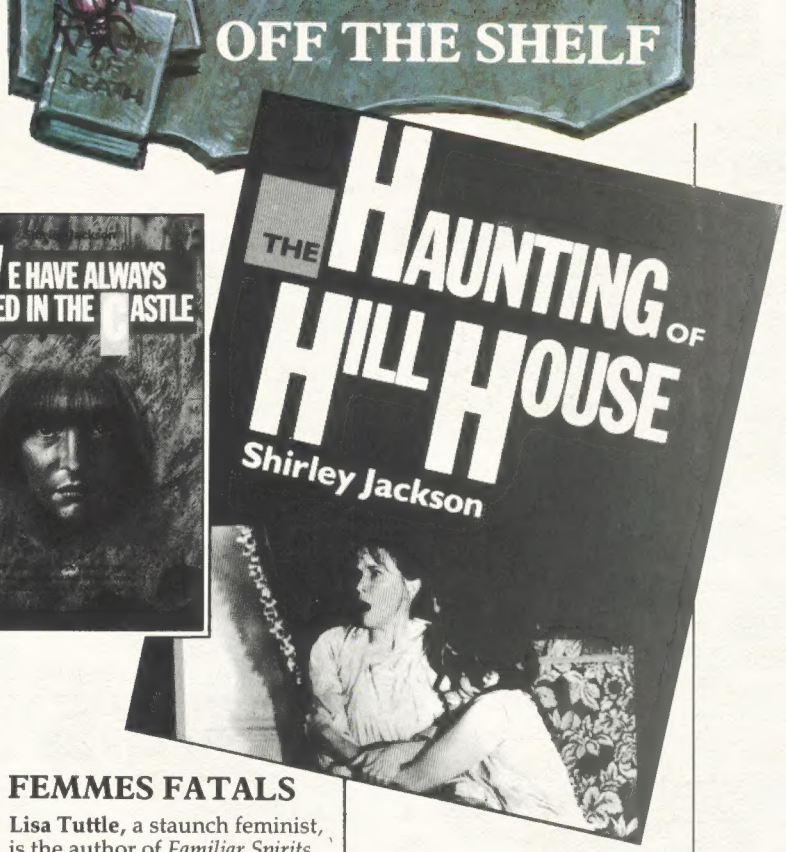
Children and terror feature in *Water Baby*, *See No Evil* and *Night Whisper* by **Patricia Wallace**, and several somewhat mundane novels by Ruby Jean Jenson. Rather better is *Amy Girl* by **Bari Wood**. Praised by Stephen King, it is a little reminiscent of his *Firestarter* and *Carrie*. Hideous psychic powers are released in an eight-year-old after seeing her drunken father brutally murder her mother. Even more impressive is *The Tribe*, about race hatred and cabalistic revenge. Wood's other books are *The Killing Gift*, *Lightsource* and the co-written *Twins* (filmed as *Dead Ringers*).

Margaret Bingley's *Seeds of Evil* (1988) concerns the products of artificial insemination who carry their donor father's evil taint. Rather similar is *The Unquiet Dead*, only this time the children are possessed. These are just two of her books that deal with malevolent offspring.

I, VAMPIRE

A child is the victim of kidnap in *The Bogeyman* by **Maxine O'Callaghan**. A farmer looks on the five-year-old as a replacement for the daughter he

RKNESS



has previously murdered. O'Callaghan's *Dark Visions* has a psychic who 'sees' a brutal murder. Suspected and hounded rather than accepted, she is helped through her ordeal by one man's belief, putting both their lives in jeopardy.

Linda Crockett Gray's *Scryer* takes the same premise. Cult members suck the psychic powers from their victims. Renee Calleo is the scryer and what she foresees is her own death. Gray's other books include *Satyr* and *Tangerine*, in which a murdered woman

"Hideous psychic powers are released in an eight-year-old after she sees her drunken father brutally murder her mother."

haunts a piano-player and is hell-bent on revenge. A slow atmospheric builder, with excellent character development and a feeling of ghostly menace rather than outright gore.

The haunted house is another popular theme. It crops up in **Clare McNally's** novels (*Ghost House* etc) and **Anne Rivers Siddon's** *The House Next Door*, which is streets (?) ahead of McNally's rather tame offering.

Lisa Cantrell's *The Manse*, a worthy winner of the Bram Stoker Award for best first novel of 1987, has a house rented out for the annual Hallowe'en celebrations with macabre props and suitably dressed actors presenting a satisfyingly spooky drama. This year, however, there are murders, and no-one can distiniguish the real horror from the fake trappings.

No look at horror fiction can ignore vampire tales. A man, Bram Stoker, may have popularised the sub-genre, but women have produced the most innovative work in recent years. Perhaps the outstanding examples are by **Anne Rice**, whose *Interview With a Vampire* (1976) was an important milestone. *Interview* is just that – Louis, a vampire, talks to a boy with a tape recorder, and we feel compassion with the horror. *The Vampire Lestat* tells of Louis' hated mentor, Lestat, and *Queen of the Damned* wraps up the trilogy (thought more volumes may follow).

Vampire Tapestry by **Suzy McKeen Charnos** has five interrelated, and at times light-hearted, tales tracing a vampire's career as a modern-day college lecturer. **Barbara Hambley's** *Immortal Blood*, set in 1907, has vampires being killed, rather than killing, and features an emancipated female professor of medicine. *Those Who Hunt the Night* is a vampire and detective blend, set at the turn of the century.

In traditional vein come the chronicles of Comte de St Germain by **Chelsea Quinn Yarbro**, six books with various historical settings, such as Paris in the 1700s (*Hotel Transylvania*) and the Medici's Italy (*The Palace*). Yarbro's other novels include *The Godforsaken*, *A Mortal Glamour* and *Time of the Fourth Horseman*. *Signs and Portents* is her collection of short stories.

Offbeat vampire novels come from **Jody Scott** with *Passing For Human* and *I, Vampire*, with the title character running a dance studio and in love with a Virginia Woolf lookalike! **Meredith Ann Pierce's** lyrical *Dark Angel* is set on the moon and is wonderful and poetic.

Another masterpiece is *Black Ambrosia* by **Elizabeth Engstrom**. Angelina, aimlessly hitch-hiking, watching people and life, becomes a creature of the night. Love of humanity, rather than lust and greed, prompt her actions and this beautiful story of one sad girl's life is a powerful and tender addition to the canon of vampire fiction. Engstrom's other book *When Darkness Loves Us* is equally fine. Her short story, *Vampire Flower*, concerns a man's sexual fantasies and an evil plant.

FEMMES FATALS

Lisa Tuttle, a staunch feminist, is the author of *Familiar Spirits*, in which Valerie calls up something which cannot be put down; it is others who have to deal with the menace in this gripping novel of possession. Gabriel has Diana's husband seemingly reincarnated in his illegitimate son, Ben, whose love for Diana is unnatural and threatening. Tuttle's short stories are collected as *A Nest of Nightmares* and *A Spaceship Made of Stone*.

Tanith Lee, described as 'The Scheherazade of our time', writes science fiction, fantasy and horror to good effect, as in *Lycanthia*, a gloomy werewolf novel, and award-winning stories *Elle Est Trois (La Mort)* and *The Gorgon*. The Arkham House collection, *Dreams of Dark and Light* (1986), covers the full range of her work.

CANNIBAL CATS

The excellent **Kathryn Ptacek** produces historical and horror novels with equal ease. *Gila* (written as Lee Simmons) is a monster on the rampage novel: 'Over the hill crawled a nightmare.' One character, Chato Del-Klinne, also appears in *Shadoweyes*, where an unearthed Red Indian fetish sets off a spate of gruesome killings. *Katrina*, like the others, is set in New Mexico, but in the past (1880). A straight-laced historian studies the Konachine tribe, while his wife blossoms as a free spirit, becoming a bloodthirsty and revengeful goddess. Excellently written and researched, *Blood Autumn* moves from Red to Asian Indians. A mysterious fever is brought back to London by Lt. Hamilton, late of the British Army in India. Could this fever have something to do with his wife's abnormal tastes. *Silence Sealed* has two true femme fatales, the Lamia, who ensnare the Romantic poets to an early grave. Though nothing bloody or unpredictable happens, the plot is beautifully unfurled.

Ptacek has also edited the collection *Women of Darkness*. Really up-to-date, with all its contributors current female writers, the only 'names' being Lisa Tuttle, Tanith Lee and Kit Reed (aka. Shelley Hyde, author of the werewolf novel *Blood Fever*). Of the rest, try **Nancy Holder's** funny *Cannibal Cats Come Out Tonight*, about two blood brothers; **Elizabeth**

"A man, Bram Stoker, may have popularised vampire tales, but women have produced the most innovative work in recent years."

Massie's *Hooked on Buzzer*, a bizarre tale of religious ecstasy and punishment, or **Melanie Tem's** *Aspen Graffiti*, a disturbing look at a disintegrating marriage.

Writers not in the anthology but worth looking out for are **Susan Caspar, Janet Fox, Juleen Brantighan** and **Hortense Calisher,** with the gem *Heartburn*.

And that wraps it up. More than 100 writers, more if space had permitted. Proof if proof were needed that the Daughters of Darkness thrive.

Seek them out.

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Dean R Koontz, Leigh Nichols, Brian Coffey, K R Dwyer etc, UK and USA first editions wanted, private collector, write to Michael Yates, 10 Fingerpost, Little Lever, Bolton BL3 1QD, Tel: (0204) 72669.

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Rare horror films for sale, old and new. Send wants lists to: Dave Brailsford, 65 Falmouth Road, Alvaston, Derby DE2 OLZ.
Stephen King's The Dark Tower: The Gunslinger. Donald Grant second edition hardback. Mint condition. Serious offers only please see Fear 2. Write to J Anderton, Royd Mount, Best Lane, Oxenhope, Keighley, West Yorks. BD22 9NA.

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DARK STAR 4: Romero's Monkey Shines, Jeremy Brett interview, Max Headroom, Doctor Who – Pertwee on stage, Roger Rabbit animator interviewed, Cyberpunk, Dead Ringers. £1.50 to "Dark Star", Publishing House, 50 Wrotham Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0QF.

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Surreal Fantasy Artist seeks similar for exhibitions, collaborations. Giger, Delvaux, Dali, Max, Ernst, Lovecraft. Phone Nick Hook, weekends and evenings on 01 679 4168. Take fantasy out of the hands of the illustrators.

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FEARFUL WINNERS

If you entered one of last month's competitions and have been waiting with breath bated ever since, then read on.

VENGEANCE THE DEMON

Pumpkinhead has retribution on his mind in this great new horror video release from CBS/Fox. The ten lucky people who knew that Stan Winston was the creator of Pumpkinhead and responsible for the special effects on the Aliens movies will be receiving a visit shortly. **The winners are:** Paul Coomber, Murston, Kent; Richard Walters, Alcester, Warwickshire; Wayne Gooderham. Northolt, Middlesex; Brian Baker, Headley Heath; Gordon Neil, Leicester; Peter Simpson, North Shields, Tyne and Wear; Mrs P Jordan, Crawley, West Sussex; Idris Evans, Rhyney, Gwent; Fred McCracken, Macclesfield, Cheshire and Ian Ward, Ashford, Kent.

BEETLEJUICE

Five copies of this comedy/horror smash hit from Warner Home Video go to those horror blockheads out there whose tastes also travel to gentler regions of screen entertainment. Yes, the film in which Michael Keaton swapped roles with his wife was *Mr Mom*. **And the winners are:** Lee Russell, Forest Gate, London; Andrew Harrison, Portadown, County Armagh; Robert Mayor, Dagenham, Essex; B Huxley, Grimsby, South Humberside and J Blair of Eastleigh, Hants.

MANIAC COP

Generous Medusa Video have a number of *Maniac Cop* videos and fabulous limited edition shirts to award to the first five people who could tell us who wrote the screenplays for *Maniac Cop* and *Q – The Winged Serpent*. The correct answer was, of course . . . it's alive again, and again . . . Larry Cohen. **The winners are:** Stuart Brewer, Middleton, Manchester; Richard Underwood, Admaston, Shropshire; David Whitworth, Heaton, Lancashire; Peter McGrath, Fagley, West Yorkshire; Chris Hibbert, Partick, Glasgow.

The five runners up, who each receive a copy of the video, are: M Faraday, Fleet, Hampshire; Elizabeth Lawson, Selby, North Yorkshire; Mr A G Davies, Rumrey, Cardiff; Daniel Farrell, Garston, Hertforshire and Jeremy K Marston, Wimborne, Dorset.

DEADLY NIGHTMARES

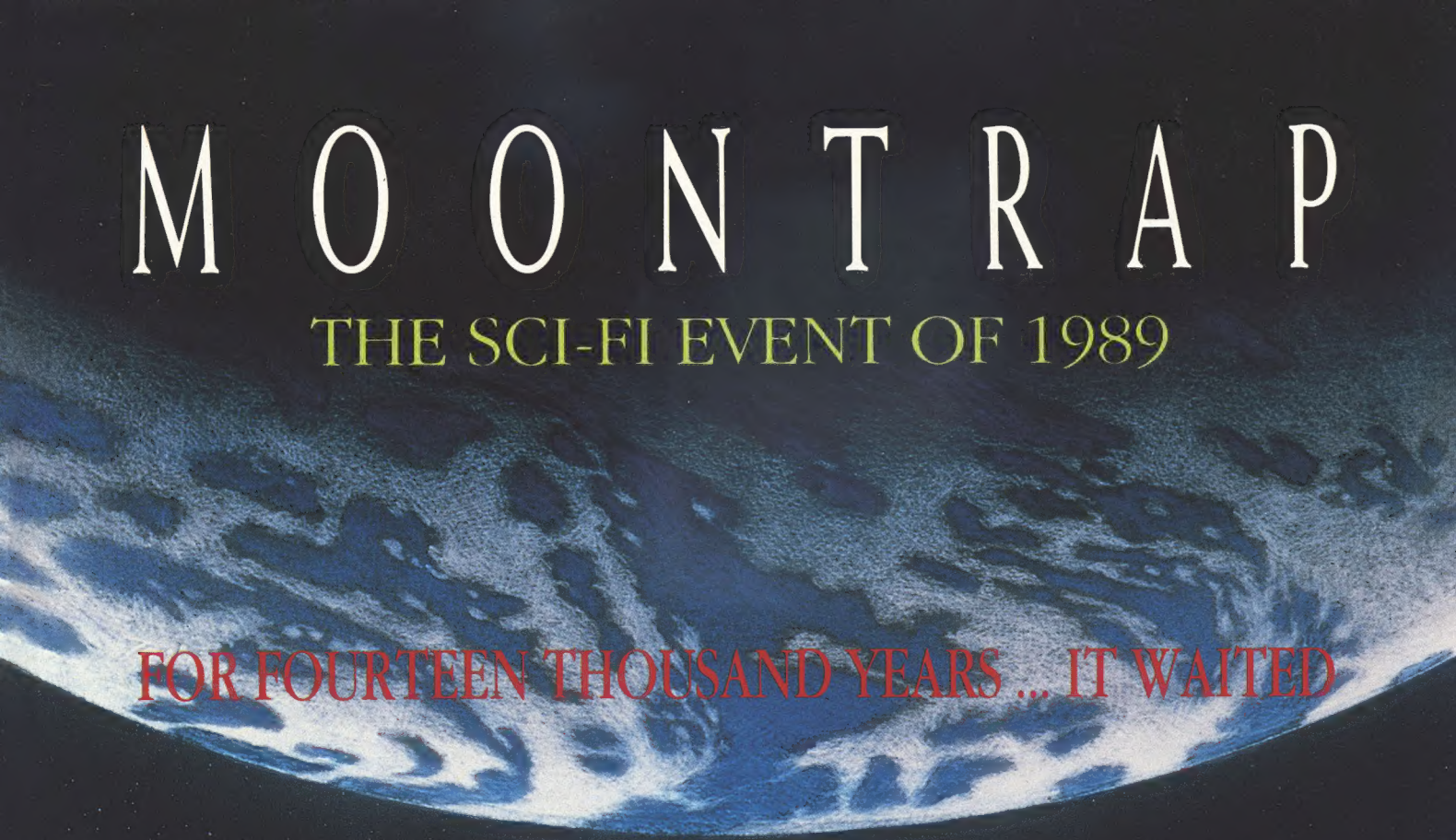
Five copies of Braveworld's creepy video anthology go to those readers who could tell us the name of the Sixties SF series which Roger Vadim directed. The answer we wanted was *Barbarella*. **The winners are:** M A Robertson, Barkingside, Essex; Stephen Wish, Friern Barnet, London; Frank Falco, Clapham South, London; Mrs J L Peacock, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk and J Wright, London SE18.

DEMON LOVER

Finally, the first five readers who knew that Oedipus was the son who killed his father out of lust for his mother are having their own personal *Demon Lover* parcelled up courtesy of RCA/Columbia. Ouch – it bites! **The winners are:** John R Herrington, Woodbridge, Suffolk; Jan Perfect, Mickleham, Surrey; Daniel Moss, Leicester; Andy Brogan, Aberdeen and Dave Chapple, Saltash, Cornwall.

MOONTRAP

THE SCI-FI EVENT OF 1989



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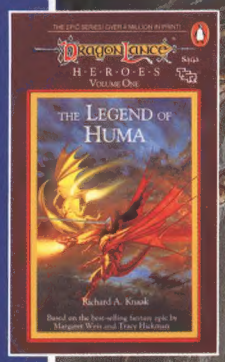

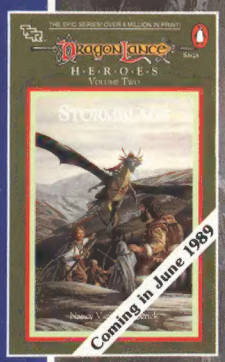

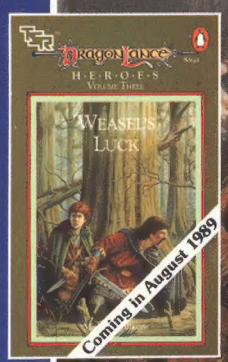

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